



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SATURDAY • MARCH 09, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KODAIKANAL • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THIRISSUR • KALABURGI

ON WOMEN'S DAY, GAS PRICES CUT,
SUDHA MURTY NOMINATED TO RS



Modi woos women voters by announcing ₹100 per cylinder price cut, nominates noted philanthropist Sudha Murty to the Rajya Sabha | P4

SECOND DROP IN
PRICES IN 6 MONTHS

This is the second reduction in LPG prices in six months. Rates were slashed by ₹200 in August. Non-subsidised cooking gas price will be cut to ₹803 per cylinder in the national capital with effect from midnight of Friday/Saturday

PRICE CUT TO EASE
FINANCIAL BURDEN

PM Narendra Modi said the reduction in LPG cylinder prices to mark Women's Day will ease the financial burden on millions of households. On Sudha, he said her presence in the party at House is a powerful testament to Nari Shakti, exemplifying the strength and potential of women in shaping the nation's destiny



Modi Sarkar Ki Guarantee

India to become world's third largest economy

India improves from 11th to 5th place in 10 years

Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat

No surprises as Rahul in first list from Wayanad, Tharoor T'puram



Congress leaders K C Venugopal (centre), Ajay Maken (right) and Pawan Khara address a press conference at the AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Friday | P1

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

MUCH along expected lines, the Congress on Friday unveiled the first list of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections with former party president Rahul Gandhi seeking a mandate from Kerala's Wayanad for the second term. The other prominent names include former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel from Rajnandgaon, Shashi Tharoor from Thiruvananthapuram and Congress general secretary K C Venugopal from Alappuzha.

Announcing the names at a press conference in the capital, Venugopal said the party's utmost priority is to dislodge the BJP government in the 2024 elections and win maximum Lok Sabha seats. Out of the 60 seats discussed by the Central Election Committee (CEC) on Thursday, 39 names were cleared for eight states.

Of the 39 candidates, 15 belong to the general category and 24 from the SC, ST, OBC, and minority communities. Besides, 12 of them are under the age of 50, he said.

While in Kerala the party has retained most of its sitting MPs except one, among the most watched contests would be in

Wayanad, where Rahul will take on his INDIA bloc ally CPI's Annie Raja. Rahul, who was previously an MP from Amethi, lost the seat in 2019 but won from Wayanad.

The other top contest will be between Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar and Shashi Tharoor, who is seeking a fourth term from Thiruvananthapuram. Kerala will see three of Congress' high-profile leaders Rahul, Venugopal and Tharoor in the fray. Sources said the decision to field Venugopal was to reclaim Alappuzha, the only seat it lost to the CPI (M) in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

As a sitting Rajya Sabha MP, Venugopal has two more years to complete his term. His decision to enter the Lok Sabha fray comes at a time when the BJP needs only a few more seats for getting majority in the RS.

In Karnataka, the Congress retained Deputy CM D K Shivakumar's brother D K Suresh in Bangalore Rural. No names have been announced for the Kalburgi seat amid speculation that Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge will contest from there. Four candidates from Telangana including former Union minister Bahram Naik (Mahabubabad) also figured in the first list.

DK Suresh, Geetha among 7 from K'taka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Congress on Friday announced its first list of seven candidates for the Lok Sabha elections in the state.

DCMDK Shivakumar told reporters that the party may release its second list on March 14. "We finalised the candidates based on the opinion of party workers, local leaders and MLAs and on the survey report's recommendations," Shivakumar said. In the first list, the Congress seems to have chosen candidates for the constituencies where it faced no competition within the party.

The list comprises DK Suresh (Bengaluru Rural), Shreyas Patel (Hassan), Geetha Shivakumar (Shivamogga), SP Mudahanume Gowda (Tumakuru), HR Alagura (Vijayapura), Anandaswamy Gaddadevaramatha (Haveri) and Venkataramanaswamy alias Star Chandru (Mandya).

Former MP Mudahanume Gowda, who joined the Congress a week ago, has been chosen for Tumakuru as the party could not find other winnable leaders. **CONTINUED ON: P4**

No word on Amethi

Though speculation is rife over Rahul's candidature from Amethi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's from Rae Bareilly, Venugopal declined comment. "The second CEC meeting on March 11 will discuss more seats," he said

Setback for Cong as I-T tribunal refuses to free up funds in banks

Party calls tax department's action politically motivated, to move Delhi High Court for relief

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

IN a setback to the Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal on Friday rejected its plea to lift the restrictions clamped on its bank accounts by the I-T department in connection with a tax dispute.

The I-T tribunal also rejected the request of senior advocate and Congress' Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Tankha to keep the order in abeyance for 10 days so that the party can approach the Delhi High Court for relief.

The Congress has alleged its

main bank accounts were frozen on February 16 following an income tax demand of ₹210 crore (₹135 crore and ₹75 crore in two separate notices) for assessment year 2018-19 and alleged discrepancies and delays in tax returns. It has also accused the taxmen of withdrawing ₹65 crore from its accounts.

Speaking to this newspaper, Vivek Tankha said the party will move the HC soon. "We are disappointed with the order of the tribunal. They have denied us the standard or-

der. We are a national party and we very well argued our case," he said, adding that the freeze on funds has put the party at a disadvantage in the election season.

The tribunal had earlier allowed Congress to operate the accounts till a final decision was reached. However, it also put a lien of ₹115 crore on the accounts, which means that much money is frozen and the party can access only the remaining funds.

Describing the tax department's action as 'politically mo-

tivated', Tankha said: "We've given logical and reasonable points to the tribunal but they did not accept them. They took away our exemption under 29C for a delay of 20 days or something (in filing tax returns). But I'm still an income tax payee. I have an income of ₹199 crore and an expenditure of ₹197 crore. So the total tax component would be only ₹60 lakh. Instead of that they are forcing over ₹135 crore," he said.

He also stressed that now only constitutional courts can rescue elections, democracy, and political parties.

CAFE BLAST: NIA DETAINS TWO IN BALLARI, B'LURU COPS QUIZ ONE

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR/
PRAVEEN KUMAR @ Ballari/Bengaluru



Screengrab of suspect at Ballari bus stand

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) probing the Rameshwaram Cafe blast case has taken two persons into custody after they were found talking to the accused who arrived in Ballari from Bengaluru.

It has also taken a terror suspect, who was arrested earlier and was lodged in prison, into custody on a body warrant. Meanwhile, Bengaluru police have picked up a man whom the bomber met after planting the IED in the cafe.

According to sources, the accused landed in Ballari the same day after the blast. The NIA released the footage of the bomber roaming around in Ballari bus stand on the night of March 1. The NIA has been following the accused after his foot-

age was obtained from the cafe in Bengaluru. A team of 10 NIA sleuths arrived in Ballari on Wednesday. The CCTV footage from Ballari bus stand shows that the accused spent at least two hours there. In another footage, he is seen speaking to two persons outside the bus stand.

Meanwhile, a police team launched a search in Ballari on Friday. The team visited some houses, shops and places of worship to gather information, while the NIA sleuths quizzed the two detained persons. Soon after the NIA team landed in Ballari, the district remained on

high alert. The accused might be travelling without using his mobile phone. The police suspect that someone in Ballari could be helping the accused.

In one of the clippings, the accused is seen running behind a bus, but not getting into it.

Meanwhile, the NIA sleuths obtained a body warrant from the NIA Special Court and took into custody Minaj alias Mohammed Sulaiman, 26, a cloth vendor from Ballari and a prime suspect in the ISIS-inspired Ballari module case. The investigators suspect links between Minaj and the cafe bomber.

The Bengaluru police are questioning the person whom the cafe bomber is said to have met on the day of the blast. It is still not known if the person is an associate of the bomber or if it was a ploy by the bomber to mislead the investigation.

EXPRESS READ

Electoral bonds: SC to hear SBI plea on March 11

New Delhi: The Supreme Court would hear on March 11 the plea filed by the SBI seeking extension of time till June 30 to give details of all electoral bonds encashed from April 2019 onwards. The apex court would also hear the contempt plea filed by ADR (Association of Democratic Reforms) on the same day against the SBI | P7

Abducted Army JCO rescued in Manipur

Imphal: A serving Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) of the Indian Army, who was abducted from his home in Manipur's Thoubal district on Friday morning, was rescued by security forces in the evening. The JCO, identified as Kamsam Kheda Singh is currently at Waikhong police station (near Kakching) in Thoubal district | P8

Seer, aide held for sexually abusing minor

EXPRESS NEW SERVICE
@ Tumakuru

IN a late night operation on Thursday, a team led by Superintendent of Police Ashok KV arrested Bala Manjunatha Swamiji, 37, and his associate K Abhilash of Vidhya Chowdeshwari temple near Huliurdurga for allegedly sexually assaulting a minor girl in a temple at Hanganahalli in Kunigal taluk of Tumakuru district.

They were arrested under the POCSO Act. The accused were produced before a local court, which remanded them in judicial custody on Friday. Abhilash is a trustee of Vidhya Chowdeshwari temple.

In a complaint with CEN crime police filed through Abhilash on February 10, the swamiji alleged that a gang led by HS Abhishek of Hosakere village in Kunigal taluk has been blackmailing him for money. The swamiji alleged that Abhishek has been threatening him that he has a video clip in which he (swamiji) is seen with a woman in a compromising position.

A woman from Bengaluru, Rajesh of Vijaya Kaali temple near Pandavapura, Srinivas and Chetan of Kavanapura village in Ramanagara district, and Nandish of Kunigal are other members of the gang, the swamiji stated in his complaint. **CONTINUED ON: P5**

SI suspended for kicking men for praying on road

UJWAL JALALI @ New Delhi

A Delhi police sub-inspector (SI) on Friday was suspended for kicking and shoving a few persons, who were offering namaz on a road in north Delhi's Inderlok area.

The incident occurred around 2 pm near Inderlok Metro Station. A sizable gathering had assembled at a mosque in the neighbourhood as it was Friday, resulting in some men spilling to the street to offer prayers. An alleged video of the incident went viral on social media triggering outrage among netizens.

The locality remained tense for several hours with the approach road to the mosque blocked by protesters for traffic. The administration de-

ployed paramilitary personnel in conjunction with the police to prevent any breakdown of the law and order situation.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (north) Manoj Kumar Meena said the protesters dispersed after they were shown the suspension order of the SI, Manoj Kumar Tomar. The blocked roads were then reopened.

Necessary disciplinary action is also being taken against the Tomar, Meena added. The news of the officer's suspension was announced through the mosque's mike, he added. Following the incident, strict surveillance was imposed on the northeast district of Delhi, which had experienced communal unrest in 2020.



A Delhi police sub-inspector seen kicking a man offering namaz on a road in Inderlok area in the national capital on Friday | P1

₹5K fine for wasting Cauvery water in B'luru

ENS @ Bengaluru

IN view of the drinking water shortage in the city, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) issued an order on Thursday announcing that a fine of Rs 5,000 will be imposed on those using Cauvery water for non-drinking purposes.

A repeat violation will attract an additional Rs 500 per day along with Rs 5,000 fine, the order issued by BWSSB chairman V Ram Prasath Manohar stated. Drinking water cannot be used for washing vehicles, gardening, construction of buildings, fountains, roadwork and such other purposes.

The order is in line with the

BWSSB Act 1964, Sections 33 and 34. The fine will be imposed under Clause 109.

The BWSSB has appealed to the people to call 1916 (call centre) if they see anyone violating the order. The city has a population of around 1.4 crore. The order has been issued keeping in mind the need to provide drinking water to all. It

makes it all the more imperative to minimise wastage of drinking water, the order said.

Of the many steps initiated to tackle water shortage in the city, prices of water supplied through tankers have been fixed and it has been made mandatory for tanker owners to register their names with the local civic authority.

TDP-JSP-BJP alliance almost done but seat-sharing not final

P HAREESH @ Vijayawada

THE tripartite alliance between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Telugu Desam Party (TDP), and Jana Sena Party (JSP) that was finalised in principle on Thursday night made no headway on Friday as the leaders of the three parties are yet to come to a consensus on seat sharing.

TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and JSP chief Pawan Kalyan stayed put in New Delhi on Friday, waiting for a call from the BJP leadership to cut ice. They flew to the national capital on Thursday and held talks with BJP national president J P Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, where the TDP reportedly expressed its readiness to join the National Democratic Alliance. They are likely to hold discussions with the BJP leadership again on Saturday. BJP's Andhra Pradesh chief Dagubati Purandeswari, who was in Delhi, reached Hyderabad on Friday night as she is scheduled to attend a public meeting addressed by former Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Nellore on Saturday.

Sources in the state BJP said the party had initially put a proposal for 10 Lok Sabha and



13 Assembly seats. A senior leader told *TNIE*, "We are ready to settle for less Assembly seats, but will insist for at least 6-7 Lok Sabha seats." He pointed out that the saffron party was able to get a good share of MP seats in all other states where it was striking an alliance. "In Odisha, where there are 21 Lok Sabha seats, the BJP is likely to get 15 seats and the ruling BJD six. If this is the case in a state where the alliance partner is in ruling, we can negotiate for more seats in AP too," he said.

In 2014, the BJP in alliance with TDP had contested 12 MLA and four MP seats. JSP was part of the alliance, but did not contest the elections.

Sources said the BJP is keen on contesting the four Lok Sabha seats it had won in the previous elections. These include Tirupati, Rajahmundry, Narasapur and Visakhapatnam. Additionally, the party is also seeking Araku, Vijayawada, Hindupur and Rajampet seats.

BROOKEFIELD CAFE SET TO REOPEN TODAY

Founder: Will pursue our goal of popularising South Indian cuisine across the world

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Brookefield branch of The Rameshwaram Cafe, which remained shut after the IED blast on March 1, is all set to serve delicacies to its customers from 6 am on Saturday.

Raghavendra Rao, co-founder & CEO, said, "There is a lesson in every incident and this one showed the unwavering support our employees have for us. On the day of the incident, despite being injured, one of my employees said, 'Give me a few days, I will come back.'"

"While this incident has altered the course of service we offer, it has also made us stronger and serve our customers more efficiently. Our response to whoever is responsible for the incident is re-opening the cafe. The blast occurred last Friday and we are all set for its reopening on Saturday," he said.

Divya Raghavendra Rao, founder of the cafe, said, "This

incident underscored the significance of security and surveillance. However, it will not discourage us. We will pursue our goal of popularising South Indian cuisine across the globe with renewed vigour and determination."

"We have consulted the police department and the hotels' association. All our branches will now have metal detectors. Two detectors have already been installed at the Brookefield branch," she told reporters on Friday evening.

"We have displayed notices around our cafes stating that unclaimed bags and suspicious objects found there will either be discarded or handed over to the police," Divya told TNIE.

PC Rao, president of the Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels' Association, said apart from CCTVs, eateries serving over 500 people daily must install metal detectors. Stringent security measures will be made mandatory to prevent such incidents in the city.



Bouncers and metal detectors outside The Rameshwaram Cafe in Brookefield on Friday ahead of its reopening on Saturday | VINOD KUMAR T

'Looking forward to serve our customers again'

Chandra Bhushan Mishra, a 56-year-old housekeeper, who sustained injuries in the bomb blast at the cafe, said, "I placed the used plates in the corner where the bag containing the bomb was kept. As I turned, I heard a loud sound. Within seconds, smoke engulfed the cafe. I stumbled thrice during my attempt to escape from the cafe." "I joined The Rameshwaram Cafe six months ago. I worked at the Hyderabad branch for the first three months and later shifted to Brookefield. With around 200 employees working three shifts in this branch, we all are eagerly looking forward to serving our customers again," Mishra from Madhya Pradesh said.

EXPRESS READ



SWR clinches women's basketball tourney

Bengaluru: The South Western Railway team secured the top spot in the finals of the Mathru Cup -- the 7th State SMN Memorial Women's Basketball League Championship -- held at Kanteerava Indoor Stadium on Friday. Mounts Club stood at second place with Beagles BC at third and Bangalore Vanguard at fourth. The winning team received a cash prize of Rs 60,000, while the runners-up received Rs 40,000. Nilaya Reddy from Mounts Club was named the 'most promising player' and Chandana from Beagles was the best player of the tournament. The trophies were presented by Kannada actors Prem, Jyothi Prem and Amrutha Prem, along with Dr K Govindaraj, MLC and political secretary to the CM and President of FIBA Asia, at the closing ceremony of the championship. ENS

City gives 3 cheers to women power

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

This year's International Women's Day celebrations revolved around the theme -- Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress -- and Bengaluru embraced the idea completely, honouring women by recognising their contributions to society. The first of the Akka cafes was launched in the city on Friday under the government's livelihood mission through the Department of Skill Development. This cafe is run exclusively by women and is located at the intersection of Kempegowda Road and Kalidasa Road in Gandhinagar.

Living up to the IT capital title, more than 30 women entrepreneurs in the city also showcased innovative green ideas and projects during the event 'Bridging Gaps to Emerging Solutions' at Bangalore Creative Circus. Organised by the #GreenHustlers initiative in as-

All women crew operate Rajya Rani Express

Bengaluru : To mark International Women's Day, the Bengaluru Railway Division had an all-women team taking care of the operations of the Rajya Rani Express. The loco pilot (LP), assistant loco pilot (ALP), train manager, ticket checking staff and security personnel on board Bengaluru to Mysuru comprised only of women. An official release said Arvind Srivastava, General Manager, SWR, flagged off Train No. 20660 from Bengaluru to Mysuru from Platform 6 at 11.35 am.

sociation with Bharat Climate Startup, it provided women with a platform to drive solutions for India's sustainable development goals (SDGs). The Canadian International School Girl Up Club also hosted an event, centred around the theme #InspireInclusion which aimed to nurture a culture of diversity, challenge societal norms and empower individuals to champion inclusivity. Shreya, a Class 11 student and member of the Girl Up Club, said, "Through

this event, we hope to nurture a community that challenges stereotypes and empowers individuals to contribute to a more inclusive future."

Meanwhile, Swiggy decided to honour its women delivery workers with a special lunch. These are the women who shine every day, bringing food, groceries and a smile to the faces of Bengalureans. The lunch was attended by more than 20 women delivery partners with their families and featured a joyous cake-cutting ceremony led by two of the platform's oldest female delivery partners, K Uma and Malathi.

Greenwood High International School celebrated the day in a unique manner, by creating awareness on cervical and breast cancer. "We invited a cancer specialist to the school to communicate the do's and don'ts that women must be aware of to prevent the occurrence of cancer," said Niru Agarwal, trustee of the school.

India's 'rocket women' leading us to the sky and beyond, says Dhankhar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is a befitting example for other organisations in promoting gender diversity as India's 'rocket women' are leading us to the sky and beyond, breaking ceilings, said Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on International Women's Day on Friday.

During his visit to the UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) in Bengaluru, he praised the space agency for its culture of gender diversity and inclusivity in the decision-making process.

While interacting with the scientific community, he said, "A woman is always in a leadership role right from birth, making contributions in society with indomitable spirit," refer-

ring to India's women scientists. The VP added that ISRO has exemplified the theme of International Women's Day 2024 -- Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress.

Speaking about the strong representation of women in space, Dhankhar said it is worth noting that presently there are about 20% women in scientific and technical areas in ISRO and more than 500 women employees are in leadership roles at

different levels in managerial and administrative domains, including leading a centre. The VP also added that he was grateful to be at the heart of India's space exploration prowess in the city and referred to ISRO as an agency that is defining India's innovation.

Dhankhar concluded by saying that ISRO is a key player and a big contributor to enhancing India's global diplomacy and soft power.



Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar marks International Women's Day with ISRO scientists at UR Rao Satellite Centre on Friday | x

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

09th March: Yesterday I was talking about the prospect of delays in communications over the coming weeks. The trick when such trends come along is to know how to take advantage of them. If a plan or proposal should be postponed, use the spare time to tackle another scheme that's been held over from months ago.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Cash and career matters are still on your mind, but do try to put practical issues behind you during the weekend. Life is too short to spend all your time worrying over how you are ever going to pay your way. Why not let partners take the responsibility and the strain?

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Make an early start if you want to get ahead of the pack. Social prospects are still bright and, although you will be giving some thought to worldly matters, you really ought to try and relax. If you don't look after yourself, then you can't expect other people to, can you?

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

It's a favourable weekend for getting financial plans into shape. Forge ahead with all family arrangements and hope for the best: someone may be arranging a very pleasant surprise for you. More pleasant, I suspect, than you could ever possibly imagine!

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Why is that people at home seem determined to disagree with your plans or think you down? Perhaps it's because you failed to consult them when you were dreaming up your current schemes. It's never too late to tell them the full facts.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Keep on the move this weekend, though you may be happier making short journeys than long. Push business matters to one side and enjoy your social life free from the cares and concerns which tend to cloud your vision. Stay active and you'll carry partners with you.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sept 23)

A partnership dispute or a delay in communications should clear very soon. If it has not already done so, turn your back on fantasy and waffle, and concentrate on what you can do of practical value. That way you will virtually guarantee your success.

LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23)

You could be in for a romantic weekend, especially if you're single. If you're spoken for, cheer up, for there is still plenty of scope for you and your partner to give life an exciting new twist. Even though you need order, you do love fortune's unexpected turns.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

Anything which is set in motion today should have a rewarding outcome. However, there is much that still needs to be explained and you may be labouring under one or two misapprehensions. These will be gradually resolved over the next two weeks.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

If you've any spare time you may wish to devote a little energy to your long-term interests, especially your investments and savings. Most of the indications suggest that ventures entered into now will eventually prove very profitable. And that is bound to bring a smile to your face.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

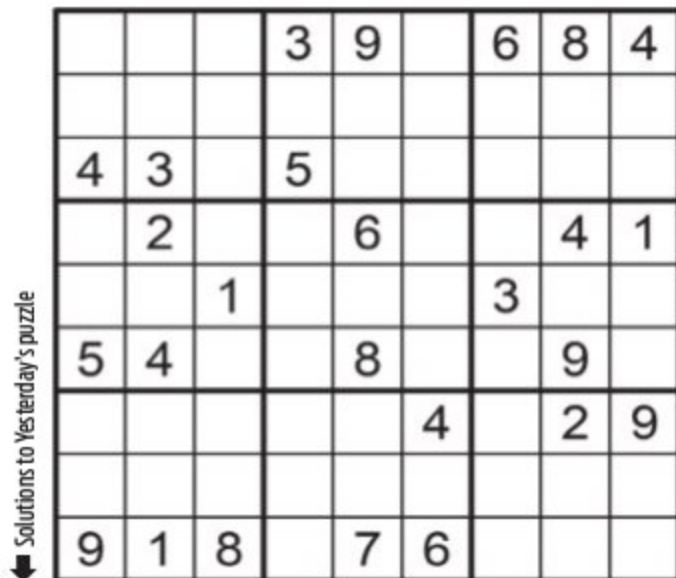
It's a romantic weekend in the broadest sense. Quite aside from the intimate, emotional side of your life, you will be looking at the world through rose-tinted spectacles. Exotic cultures may beckon but, as you know, when you arrive somewhere new, you're still you. That will never change!

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

A restless mood may make it difficult to concentrate, but there will be rewards if you find yourself in unfamiliar surroundings. Social gatherings have much to offer this evening. And, in that case, why not go for broke, and take a risk with your feelings?

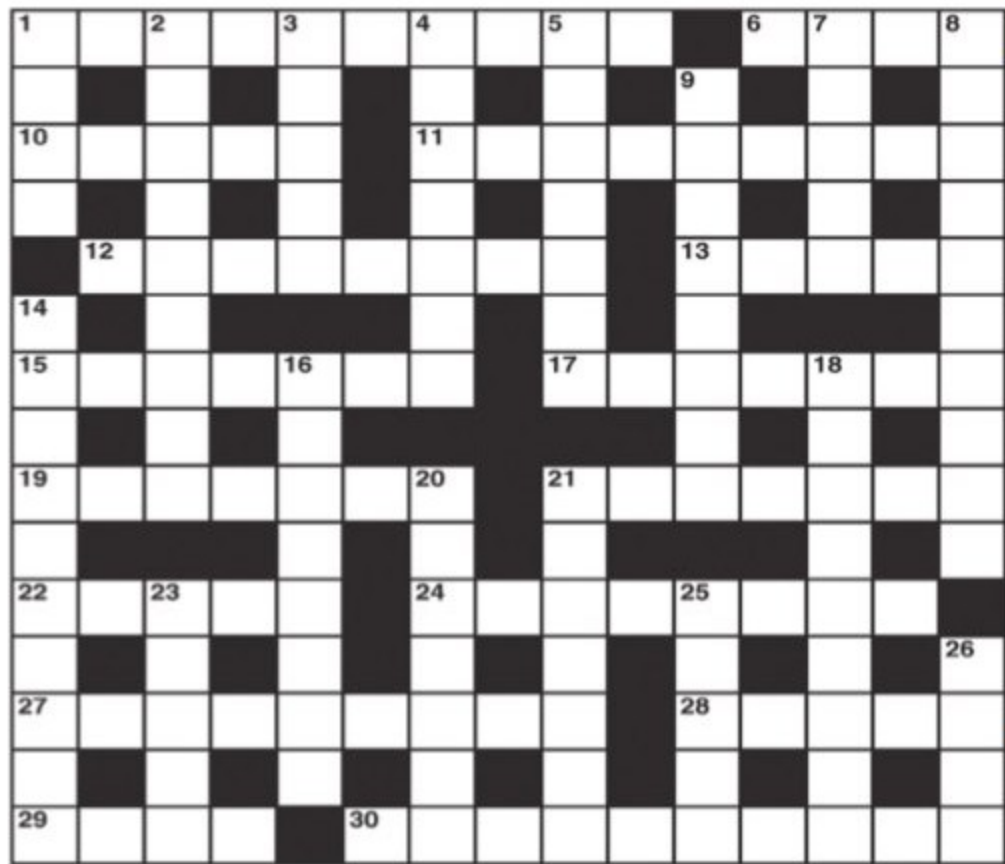
PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Diplomacy is still your best policy if you're trying to hang on to one part of a friendship. On the other hand, if you are at the end of your tether there is no better moment to set yourself free. The Sun's alignment with Venus is gentle, creative, affectionate and favourable.



TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3x3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Uriah's mate is terribly unprofessional (10)
2. Pound note remains (4)
3. Follow directions and engage in litigation (5)
4. Took the main course but possibly not as sweet (4,2,3)
5. Team not assumed to be of star quality (8)
6. Inter perhaps when lifeless (5)
7. Religious passage - a tissue of lies (5)
8. A flower will transform these areas (6-4)
9. It may be assumed it's stuck theatrically (8)
10. Used by the teacher when correcting papers? (7,3)
11. Vendors possibly nameless (8)
12. Robs banks in order to get a door fitting (5,4)
13. Hold forth on medical reform (7)
14. One who shows rank subservience? (7)
15. Reprise it in male offspring (3,2)
16. Articles set up by Robert - a rich man (5)
17. It has no earthly connection with the mainland (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Fatigue, 5 Aches, 8 Umlight, 9 Moa, 10 Oat, 12 Animate, 14 Escays, 15 Annual, 17 Exposure, 18 Thea, 21 Ass, 22 In the dark, 24 Theme, 25 Release.

DOWN

1. Eager to behead the king of Israel (4)
2. Detest having a crowd up in to tea perhaps (9)
3. Follow directions and engage in litigation (5)
4. Inexperience produces the wrong answers (7)
5. Records set in tennis matches (7)
6. Religious passage - a tissue of lies (5)
7. A flower will transform these areas (6-4)
8. It may be assumed it's stuck theatrically (8)
9. Used by the teacher when correcting papers? (7,3)
10. Vendors possibly nameless (8)
11. Robs banks in order to get a door fitting (5,4)
12. Hold forth on medical reform (7)
13. One who shows rank subservience? (7)
14. Reprise it in male offspring (3,2)
15. Articles set up by Robert - a rich man (5)
16. It has no earthly connection with the mainland (4)

JUMBLE

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

EMACO
WONOS
BLLAGO
SVINIO

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.
Yesterday's Jumbles: FLUTE SWIRL ACTUAL PARDON
Answer: When their insurance overpaid to clean up the tree downed in the storm. It was -- A WINDFALL

BIG RELIEF

HC QUASHES MONEY LAUNDERING CASE AGAINST RAZORPAY

Court observes that there is no prima facie material against the company in the case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court quashed the proceedings against Razorpay Software Pvt Ltd (RSPL), the payment gateway, under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Allowing the petition filed by Razorpay, Justice Hemant Chandangoudar questioned the validity of the complaint registered by ED. "When there is no prima facie material to substantiate that RSPL knowingly facilitated the transfer of proceeds of the crime, no presumption can be drawn that RSPL was involved in money laundering as stated under Section 24 of the PMLA," the court said.



ED alleged that RSPL was negligent in allowing transactions in the name of Jamnadas Morarji Finance Pvt Ltd (JMFPL), accused No.5, without due diligence which was substantiated by an employee of RSPL.

The court noted that there is

no evidence to suggest that RSPL knew that the funds transferred to the merchant IDs of JMFPL were derived from criminal activity. Nor did they knowingly assist JMFPL in concealing or transferring illicit proceeds as clean money and there is no evidence to establish that RSPL had the intention to commit the crime under Section 3 of the PMLA.

FIRs were registered by the jurisdictional police under Sections 419, 385, 384, 509, 420 of IPC and Sections 66, 66(c), 66(d) and 67 of the Information Technology Act, stating that the accused in those cases were involved in money lending through mobile phone applications on exorbitant rates of interest.

Further, it was alleged that when the borrowers failed to repay the loan amount in time, and in some cases, even after the repayment of the loan, the accused have been harassing the borrowers to extort money from them, and had also stolen data from the mobile phones of the victims, and misused them.

The accused had also created WhatsApp groups to harass victims, abuse them etc. As the offences under Sections 384, 385, 419, and 420 IPC are scheduled offences under the PMLA Act, the case was referred to ED, which submitted the complaint before the jurisdictional court in the city arraigning RSPL as accused No 7 after the investigation.

Man accuses wife, 2 others of torturing 10-yr-old daughter

ENS @ Bengaluru

A woman and her two relatives were booked for allegedly torturing her 10-year-old daughter by burning her with cigarette butts. The JJ Nagar police registered a case after the girl's father filed a complaint.

But the police suspect that the complainant, Imran Khan, has forced his daughter to make false and frivolous allegations against her mother, Ayesha Bibi, as he wants a mutual divorce from his wife. The complaint also names

Jabeer Khan and Saleem.

Imran Khan told the media that he never took his daughter's complaint seriously earlier, assuming that she must be lying about her mother. "On February 24, I took my child to a park and dropped them at their mother's house. After some time, my daughter came on video call and started crying, saying that her mother is hitting her with a broom stick for going out with me. I took both my children to my house near Jnanabharathi. My

daughter has undergone severe mental harassment. As her health condition deteriorated, I took her to Victoria Hospital, where she revealed about the torture she was going through," he added.

Khan said he got married to Ayesha in 2013 and the two sep-

arated after nine years.

"Khan's media statements are far from the truth. In fact, Khan wants a mutual divorce from his wife. Ayesha has not signed the divorce application. He has made his daughter make false accusations against her mother so that she signs the divorce application"



Khan's media statements are far from the truth. In fact, Khan wants a mutual divorce from his wife. Ayesha has not signed the divorce application. He has made his daughter make false accusations against her mother so that she signs the divorce application"

A police officer

the divorce application. Ayesha was taking good care of her children. Since the girl is making allegations, the complaint was filed. The two men against whom the complaint is filed are Ayesha's cousins," said an officer. The complaint was filed on Tuesday. The three are booked under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2015, criminal intimidation (IPC 506), causing hurt (IPC 323) and causing hurt by dangerous weapons (IPC 324).



NIGHT OF DEVOTION

Devotees offer prayers at the Shiva Temple on Old Airport Road, on the occasion of Mahashivaratri, in Bengaluru on Friday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

HC slaps ₹8.75L fine on petitioners

END @ Bengaluru

OBSERVING that the competitive examination is essential to recruit personnel in public employment, the Karnataka High Court imposed Rs 8.75 lakh cost on 35 petitioners at Rs 25,000 each, while dismissing their petition.

They had questioned an order passed by the Karnataka

State Administrative Tribunal about the legality of the procedure adopted in the recruitment of veterinary health officers.

A division bench of Justices K Somashekar and Rajesh Rai K imposed the cost on Sunil G and 34 others, who have to pay the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority.

Confirming the order passed by the Tribunal, which

framed by the state government to appoint veterinary officers through direct recruitment is ultra vires, the court said, "Strong competition is the essence of public employment, thereby allowing the state to select the best for public employment. Absence of competition means nothing but a disservice action".

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES CIRCLE, KOTA
S.No.SE/WRC/e-NIB-14/2023-24/4998-5041 Date : 29.2.2024
e-NIB No. - 14/2023-24
On behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan, e-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors for the work "Item No. 01 Construction of Protection wall & Approach road at partially submerged village Raghunathpura, G.P. - Madanpura under Takli M.P. Tehsil. - Ramganjmandi, Distt. - Kota (Estimated cost 270.87 Lacs) from 01.03.2024 (9:30 Hr) to 20.03.2024 till 18:00 Hr. Item No. 02 Pipe line crossing across Bharatmala road at Takli Medium Irrigation Project, Ramganjmandi, District Kota" (Estimated cost 178.97 Lacs) from 01.03.2024 (9:30 Hr) to 11.03.2024 till 18:00 Hr.
Other Particulars, terms and conditions may be seen on the procurement portal <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> & <https://spp.rajasthan.gov.in> and www.dipr-rajasthan.gov.in & www.water-rajasthan.gov.in
NIB Code : WRD2324A0677 Sd/-
UBN No. Item No. 01 WRD2324WSOB02018 Superintending Engineer,
Item No. 02 WRD2324WSOB02019 Water Resources Circle, Kota
DIPR/C2311/2024

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF ODISHA
(Established Under the Central Universities Act, 2009)
Dept. of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India
Post- NAD, Sunabeda, Dist: Koraput, Odisha, Pin-763004
Advertisement No. 01, 02, 03/2024 Date: 09.03.2024
EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION FOR FACULTY POSITIONS: PROFESSOR, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
Online applications are invited through CU-Chayan portal from Eligible Indian Citizens and candidates possessing Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) for appointment to the posts of Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor in the Academic Pay Level 14, 13A and 10 of 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Scales, in various Departments of the University on direct recruitment. The important dates are as follows:
Date of Short advertisement 09.03.2024
Date of detailed advertisement in the University Website 09.03.2024
Date of online application (CU-Chayan) 26.03.2024
Last date of online application (CU-Chayan) 25.04.2024
For details, please visit the University website www.cuo.ac.in
Sd/- Registrar

Government of Karnataka
(Infrastructure Development, Ports & Inland Water Transport Department)
Karnataka Maritime Board
Office of the Marine Engineer, Department of Ports & IWT, Baithkhol, Karwar- 581302
No.ME/GN/ICR- 03/2023 Date: 07.03.2024
TENDER NOTICE (Only in E-Procurement) (TWO COVER SYSTEM)
Tender is invited by the undersigned in E-Procurement (KPPP) portal for the mentioned service. The reputed, bonafide, resourceful & experienced registered firms/ contractors and interested shipping companies who have executed and are having experience in similar nature of service can participate in the Tender through E-procurement portal. To obtain more information, please visit the website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> (Tender Indent No. IDD/2023-24/SE0013)
Name of work: Providing 2 Nos. of minimum 30 Ton Bollard pull capacity each Tug service on revenue sharing basis for berthing and unberthing of ships and search and rescue operations for a period of 3 years at Karwar Port, Uttara Kannada round the clock (24 hrs a day) including Handling, Operation and Maintenance (HOM) charges of Tug, Fuel, Lubricants, Water, Manning Crew, Maintenance, etc., and inclusive of all applicable taxes.
Bidding Parameter is Payment of Royalty per GRT of the vessels berthed and unberthed each way subject to minimum of Rs.5000/- payable to the Karnataka Maritime Board subject to conditions mentioned in the bid document
EMD: As mentioned in bid document, Last date for Quarries: 05.04.2024 @ 17.30 hours, Last Date for receipt of Tender: 08.04.2024 @ 17.00 hours
For further details and general enquiries, interested firms/ contractors may contact the undersigned office E-mail: marineengineerkrwr@gmail.com and phone No: 08382 221402 during working hours, before last date of quarries.
Sd/- Marine Engineer, Karwar
DIPR/ADK/MCA/820/23-24 dt. 07.03.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
The General Public is hereby informed that, my client Mrs. Rehana Kauser, W/o Mr. Syed Abdul Khader, residing at No.6, 8th Main Road, Jayanagar, 3rd Block, Bangalore-560 011, is the absolute owner of the schedule property mentioned below, having acquired the same vide Regd., Sale Deed dated : 28.02.2013, registered as Document No.4647/2012-13 of Book-1 and stored in C.D.No.HLS069, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Halesor, which is more fully described in the schedule below.
It is further notified to the General Public that, Mrs. Rehana Kauser had lost the Duplicate Copy of Sale Deed dated : 11.01.1999 Regd., on 17.04.1999, Document No.8697/1998-99 of Book-1, in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Krishnarajapura, executed by Mr. Justin John Rep., by his GPA Holder Mr. Nayeem Noor in favour of Sri. B.Hari Kumar. A Police Complaint has been lodged with Bangalore City Police vide Lost Article Report dated : 29.02.2024. I hereby request that if any persons come across or find the same, they are request to hand over the same to the below mentioned address and they will be compensated accordingly.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing No.24, Katha No.309-24, OMC Katha No.309, BBMP SL No.37, present BBMP Katha No.336, Old 309/24, Site No.24, formed out of converted land bearing Sy. Nos.125/3, 126/1 and 127, situated at Pattandur Agrahara Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, measuring East : 64 Feet, West : 60 Feet, North : 85 Feet and South : 62.5 Feet, in all measuring 1787.06 Sq. Meters or 19229 Sq. Feet.
Mrs. KANCHANA SUSHMA, Advocate No.91, 9th Cross, Cubbonpet, Bangalore-560002, Mobile : 9538947326

OBITUARY
The General Public is hereby informed that, my client Mrs. Rehana Kauser, W/o Mr. Syed Abdul Khader, residing at No.6, 8th Main Road, Jayanagar, 3rd Block, Bangalore-560 011, is the absolute owner of the schedule property mentioned below, having acquired the same vide Regd., Sale Deed dated : 28.02.2013, registered as Document No.4647/2012-13 of Book-1 and stored in C.D.No.HLS069, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Halesor, which is more fully described in the schedule below.
It is further notified to the General Public that, Mrs. Rehana Kauser had lost the Duplicate Copy of Sale Deed dated : 11.01.1999 Regd., on 17.04.1999, Document No.8697/1998-99 of Book-1, in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Krishnarajapura, executed by Mr. Justin John Rep., by his GPA Holder Mr. Nayeem Noor in favour of Sri. B.Hari Kumar. A Police Complaint has been lodged with Bangalore City Police vide Lost Article Report dated : 29.02.2024. I hereby request that if any persons come across or find the same, they are request to hand over the same to the below mentioned address and they will be compensated accordingly.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing No.24, Katha No.309-24, OMC Katha No.309, BBMP SL No.37, present BBMP Katha No.336, Old 309/24, Site No.24, formed out of converted land bearing Sy. Nos.125/3, 126/1 and 127, situated at Pattandur Agrahara Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, measuring East : 64 Feet, West : 60 Feet, North : 85 Feet and South : 62.5 Feet, in all measuring 1787.06 Sq. Meters or 19229 Sq. Feet.
Mrs. KANCHANA SUSHMA, Advocate No.91, 9th Cross, Cubbonpet, Bangalore-560002, Mobile : 9538947326

ANJUMAN - E - ISLAM
M. G. Road, BIJAPUR-586101 (Karnataka State)
WANTED
Applications are invited from the eligible candidates for the post of Assistant Professor in Minority (Muslim) Aided Institute Anjuman Arts, Science and Commerce College, Vijayapura, managed by the Anjuman-E-Islam, Vijayapura as per the Government order No: ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಕಾಬ/194/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/2018-19/ಬಿಎ-2, ದಿನಾಂಕ:04-03-2024 of the Commissioner of Collegiate Education, Bengaluru and letter No. ಕಾಬ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/100/ ಬಿಎಎಸ್-3/2016-17, ದಿನಾಂಕ:06-03-2024 of the Regional Joint Director, Department of Collegiate Education, Dharwad.

SL. NO	Subject	No. of Posts	Reservation
1	Mathematics	02	Not Applicable
2	Education	01	Not Applicable
3	History	01	Not Applicable
4	Zoology	01	Not Applicable
5	Botany	02	Not Applicable

Instructions to Candidates: 1) Candidates must hold Masters Degree in the concerned subject with minimum 55% of marks (50% for SC/ST). Must have qualified in SLET/NET or Ph.D. with course work. Eligibility of candidates possessing Ph.D. qualification / registered prior to 11-07-2009 will be subject to fulfilling the conditions laid in UGC notifications dated 04-05-2016. 2) Age limit for General Merit 40 years, SC/ST/Cat-I 45 years. other categories (II A, IIB, IIA, IIB) 43 years. Age relaxation is given as per the Govt. order No.ED/87/UPC/2016, dated: 13.12.2018, to those who served as fulltime lecturer in the Aided Degree Colleges for the actual period of service or 05 years whichever is less. 3) The selection process will be as per the UGC guidelines 2018 and Government of Karnataka. 4) Pay scale and other conditions will be as per the UGC guidelines 2018 and Government of Karnataka. 5) Candidates already working in Institutions are required to submit their applications with NOC from the concerned Head of the Institution. 6) Interview date will be informed separately and no TA/DA will be given for attending interview. 7) N e a t l y typed application with complete information and attested copies of certificates should reach "Secretary Anjuman-E-Islam, M.G. Road, Opposite Head Post Office, Vijayapur-586101, within 21 days of publication of this notification in newspaper Register Post alongwith Non-Refundable application fee of Rs.3000/- for GM & OBC candidates, Rs.1500/- for the SC/ST/Cat-I Candidates in the form of DD payable in favour of "Vice President, Anjuman-E-Islam, Vijayapur". The envelope containing the application should have the title "The application for the post of _____". One copy of the application should be submitted to Joint Director, Department of Collegiate Education, Regional Office, Dharwad-580001, within the due date. 8) I n c o m p l e t e and applications received after the due date will not be considered. 9) At any stage of the selection process the department / Govt. has power to cancel the sanction and selection of the said post. Submission of application and appearing for the interview will not constitute any right for appointment.
Place: Vijayapur Sd/- President,
Date:08.03.2024 Anjuman -E-Islam, Vijayapur.

EAST WEST INSTITUTIONS
BENGALURU - MYSURU
FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATION
Remembrance of **82nd BIRTHDAY**
of our Beloved Founder Chairman
Late. Sri C.M NAGARAJ
Former Mayor B.B.M.P, Bengaluru
Inauguration of New Building for
EAST WEST INSTITUTE OF PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES
(on Big Banyan Tree Road)
56 Years Excellence
On Saturday 9th March 2024 at 10.00 am
All Are Cordially Invited
EAST WEST INSTITUTIONS
187, Dodda Alada Mara Main Road, Kumbalagodu, Kengeri Hobli, Bangalore - South | Ph : 6360167901
Smt CHITRAKALA NAGARAJ
CHAIRPERSON, CO-FOUNDER
EAST WEST INSTITUTIONS
Bengaluru - Mysuru
East West Academy - MALLESHWARAM
East West Academy - RAJAJINAGAR
The Great Eastern International Public School - MAGADI ROAD
The Great Eastern Pre-University College - MAGADI ROAD
East West International School - MYSURU
East West Sports Academy - BENGALURU - MYSURU
East West Cricket Academy - YESHWANTHPUR / MAGADI ROAD
KUMBALAGODU, MYSURU ROAD
East West Business School - BBA / BCA / B.Com
East West School of Nursing - GNM
S.V.N. College of Nursing - B.Sc (N), PB B.Sc (N), M.Sc (N)
Madhu School of Nursing - GNM
East West Independent Pre-University College - SCIENCE / COMMERCE
East West Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences - B PHARM

BJP LIKELY TO ANNOUNCE ITS K'TAKA LIST ON MONDAY

Sources cite Mahashivaratri, and party leaders needing more time to finalise names of candidates, for the delay

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

WHILE the Congress has already announced the first list of candidates for the Lok Sabha constituencies in Karnataka, the BJP is yet to come out with its own. The ruling party at the Centre is likely to announce its list of candidates for Karnataka on Monday, following the party's Central Election Committee (CEC) meeting. Earlier, the meeting was scheduled for Friday.

The BJP, which has announced 195 names across many other states, is expected to announce names for the remaining Lok Sabha constituencies soon. According to sources, the party was earlier scheduled to announce names on March 8, but with Mahashivaratri, and also party leaders needing more time to finalise names of candidates, the task has been put off.

Sources from the party said that the national leaders have carried out intense research on each of the candidates from the list shared by the Karnataka unit. There was also a PPT presentation on the candidates.

At the meeting, the leaders discussed the advantages and disadvantages of fielding candidates, their strengths, support from local leaders, their



loyalty, and other issues. There was a meeting on Thursday.

BJP leaders in Delhi are planning to change at least half of the sitting MPs, including for Bangalore North, Bidar, Belagavi, Chitradurga, Davanagere, Kolar, and Chikkaballapura. In its alliance with JDS, the BJP has some challenge in finalising candidates for certain constituencies like Mandya and Kolar.

Sources added that the leaders are targeting 400 seats this time and Karnataka has the potential to help us reach that number. Hence, more time is being taken to arrive at the final list of contenders. We want to retain the 2019 number," sources said. Meanwhile, JDS leaders in Karnataka have started meetings in a bid to increase their base.

Sriramulu worried as Reddy says will field candidate in LS election

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @Ballari

Former minister and BJP Lok Sabha ticket aspirant B Sriramulu is said to be tense after the recent announcement of his once close friend and Gangavathi MLA G Janardhana Reddy, who stated that a candidate from his Kalyana Rajya Pragati Paksha (KRPP) would contest from the Ballari Lok Sabha constituency.

Sriramulu, who lost the Assembly election from Ballari Rural, is expected to get the Lok Sabha ticket from BJP. But a KRPP candidate could eat into his vote share, affecting his chances of winning the election. Now, a worried Sriramulu is said to be trying to convince Reddy against fielding the candidate.

A KRPP worker told *TNIE* that Reddy called a meeting last week to discuss fielding a party candidate from Ballari. "At the meeting, he expressed his displeasure over Sriramulu not extending his support to KRPP when it was launched. In the last Assembly election, too, he worked against Aruna Laxmi, the party candidate and Reddy's wife. It is not fair on his part to seek our help now," the worker added.

"Reddy supported Sriramulu from the very start of his political career. But he did not stand by Reddy, who was going through horrendous times, personally and politically, over the last few years. It is certain that our party will field a candidate from Ballari, which is a Scheduled Tribe (Reserved) constituency," he said.

During the recent Rajya Sabha polls, Reddy voted in favour of the Congress candidate, showing where his sympathies lie now. The decision to field the candidate against Sriramulu is a political plot to divide the votes to favour the Congress candidate, a political expert observed.



B Sriramulu



G Janardhana Reddy

In the last Assembly election, too, he (Sriramulu) worked against Aruna Laxmi, the party candidate and Reddy's wife. It is not fair on his part to seek our help now

A KRPP worker

It's face-off between children of two former CMs in Shivamogga

RAMACHANDRA V GUNARI
@Shivamogga

WITH Congress announcing Geetha Shivarajkumar as the candidate for the Shivamogga Lok Sabha constituency on Friday, it is almost certain now that the constituency will witness a clash between the children of two former chief ministers.

Geetha is the daughter of late S Bangarappa, while the sitting MP BY Raghavendra is BS Yediyurappa's son. Though Raghavendra's name was not announced in the first BJP list, it is almost certain that he would be the candidate from the constituency, considering the development work he has taken up in the last five years.

Geetha's candidature was expected as she rented a house next to her brother and minister Madhu Bangarappa's house in the city on March 3, which was Madhu's birthday.

"Both Bangarappa and Yediyurappa came up in state politics as they fought for issues concerning people, like bagair hukum land, bonded labourers, Sharavathi evacuees and irrigation of dry patches in the district. They also contributed significantly to the growth of the district. Now, it is interesting that the second generation of

the two families are facing off each other," said a senior leader from district Congress.

Raghavendra has won all the three parliamentary elections he has contested since 2009. He defeated Bangarappa once and Madhu Bangarappa twice in the 2018 by-election as well as the 2019 general elections. In 2014, Yediyurappa defeated Geetha, who contested on a JDS ticket. Geetha, who is the wife of Kannada film superstar Shivarajkumar, then had a posse of prominent Kannada actors campaigning for her.

Shivarajkumar, on March 3, said he would definitely campaign for his wife if she contests from the constituency. Now, with Congress ruling the state, Madhu being the district in-charge minister and Shivarajkumar being a popular figure, the party will put up a strong fight against Raghavendra.

Madhu, during a recent visit to the district, had said, "The five guarantees of Congress will surpass PM Modi's guarantees in this election."

But an unperturbed Raghavendra told The New Indian Express that his development works, including the railway projects taken up across the constituency, including Baindur of Udipi district, would favour him in the election.



Geetha Shivarajkumar



Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur attends a 'Viksit Bharat' programme in Bengaluru on Friday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Tax used to help poor: Anurag

ENS @Bengaluru

THE Union Government has used people's tax money for the welfare of the poor, Union Minister of Sports, Youth Affairs and Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur said on Friday Addressing over 50 Viksit Bharat Ambassadors, including unicorn founders, institution builders, and others in Bengaluru, Thakur said, "You people are paying taxes honestly. We are utilising every single paise for the welfare of the poor and for the nation's development. This will continue even in future. We will utilise tax money for better use."

Speaking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure as Prime Minister for the last 10 years, Thakur said that Modi has given corruption-free and pro-development governance. In future too, there will be corruption-free governance. He said people are getting money without middlemen, as it is being sent through Direct Beneficiary Transfer. He stressed on many international reports that India is one of the fastest growing countries around the globe. "We have excelled from sports to space," he said.

Prior to 2014, Thakur said there were many scams, unscientific policies and a debt-burdened nation, which has reduced now. He said they have provided LPG cylinders to 10 crore people, over 12 crore toilets have been constructed, and 14 crore tap connections have been provided. "Over 60 crore people were given Rs 5 lakh medical insurance. Over 80 crore people are getting free grains and over 200 crore doses of free Covid vaccines were given. People's tax money is not going waste," he said.

Thakur further added that India needs its people's contribution for 'Viksit Bharat'. "Their contribution is more important," he added.

President Murmu nominates Sudha Murty to Rajya Sabha

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR
@New Delhi

PRESIDENT Droupadi Murmu on Friday nominated acclaimed philanthropist and author Sudha Murty to the Upper House from the President's quota. It comes a day after the country celebrated Women's Day, glorifying the power of 'Nari-Shakti' (women-power).

Sharing it on his X account, Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted, "I am delighted

that the President of India has nominated Sudha Murty Ji to the Rajya Sabha. Sudha Ji's contributions to diverse fields including social work, philanthropy and education have been immense and inspiring." The President can nominate 12 personalities from different fields to the Rajya Sabha.

Murty, wife of Infosys co-founder NR Narayana Murthy, is a recipient of Padma Shri in 2006 and Padma Bhushan in 2023, recognising her work in

philanthropy.

Murty posted on X, "Thank you, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji. It is my privilege and honour to be nominated to the Rajya Sabha by our Hon'ble President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu Ji @rashtrapatibhvn. I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve our nation." She said her nomination was a double surprise as it



came on Women's Day.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve our country and its people, both of whom have taught me so much about life and have given my family and me far more than we could ever imagine."

In a statement, Murty said, "I shall strive to live up to what my elders taught me when I was growing up, that the purpose of this life and

body is to serve others."

BJP state president BY Vijayendra posted on X, "It's a moment of great pride for the entire Karnataka to witness Sudha Murty Ji's remarkable contributions to society, philanthropy, and education being recognised. This nomination truly embodies the essence of 'Nari Shakti' under the guidance of our Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji. Heartily wishing her a successful tenure in Parliament."

Cong chooses Lingayat for central Karnataka

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

COOPERATION Minister KN Rajanna and Home Minister G Parameashwara backed his candidature as they felt that grooming any new leader in the district would have an adverse impact on their political careers, a Congress leader said.

In Mandya, the party selected Star Chandru, a moneybag and younger brother of Gauribidanur independent MLA Puttaswamy-gowda, ignoring Dr HN Ravindra, who resigned as KPCC general secretary after learning that he would not get the party's nomination. Former MP late G Puttaswamy Gowda's grandson Shreyas Patel will contest from Hassan. Shreyas lost to HD Revanna in the Assembly polls by a thin margin. He will now take on Revanna's son and sitting MP Prajwal Revanna, grandson of former PM HD Deve Gowda.

Kannada thespian Dr Rajkumar's daughter-in-law Geetha Shivarajkumar will take on former CM BS Yediyurappa's son and sitting MP BY Raghavendra in Shivamogga. In 2014, she unsuccessfully contested against BJP's BS Yediyurappa on JDS ticket.

Gaddadevaramathla hails from Lingayat community's 'jangama' sub-sect with a population of over 1.5 lakh. "We have an edge over BJP in Haveri. The saffron party has only one MLA in the LS constituency Having KPCC working president Saleem Ahmed as MLC is an added advantage," Haveri DCC president MM Hiremath said. The party chose a Lingayat for the central Karnataka constituency as BJP has plans to field former CM Basavaraj Bommai from there.

NIA charges suspect in Shivamogga graffiti case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Shivamogga

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday chargesheeted one more accused, while filing additional charges against two others, in the Shivamogga ISIS conspiracy case, relating to writing of graffiti in Mangaluru, in support of proscribed terror outfits Islamic State (IS), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and the Taliban.

The NIA stated in a press release on Friday that in its second supplementary chargesheet filed in the case, it



has charged Arafath Ali, and filed additional charges against Mohammed Shariq and Maaz Muneer Ahmed in the case RC-46/2022/NIA/DLI.

Arafath, who had radicalised and hired the other ac-

cused for writing graffiti on the wall in January 2020, was arrested by the NIA at the Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, on his return from Kenya on September 14, 2023. He had earlier fled to Dubai in anticipation of his arrest in another case (the AI-Hind module case) for his association with two absconding accused, Abdul Matheen Taha and Mussavir Hussain Shazeb.

It was on the instruction of Matheen and Hussain that Arafath had indoctrinated Shariq, Maaz Muneer and others to write graffiti in support

of terror and terror outfits at two places in Mangaluru, NIA investigations have revealed.

It was further found that Arafath, along with his associates and an online handler, was part of a larger conspiracy to further terror activities of ISIS. Arafath had paid the graffiti writers funds received from his online handler in the form of cryptocurrency.

The NIA had earlier filed one main and one supplementary chargesheet against nine accused, including Shariq and Maaz Muneer. Further investigation is under way.

MY TAKE

₹10L paradise for 'bounty hunters', a problem for innocents

HERE is a disturbing outcome of the March 1 Rameshwaram Cafe blast in Bengaluru. The desperate hunt for the missing perpetrator of the blast — who has been on the run, successfully evading his pursuers — has led to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) announcing a Rs 10 lakh reward for anyone who can help identify and point out the person, so he can be nabbed and brought to justice.

Blurred video grabs and images of this elusive man began doing rounds on TV channels and social media after the blast, but a day after NIA announced the reward, sketches of the suspect too have gone viral on social media.

But these sketches are drawn by people who are not authorized by the NIA or the police. These are common folks with talent of making sketches of facial features who are putting them out on social media to help people identify the culprit. And that is going viral.

This could take a threatening turn of targeting innocent persons. It has made probably thousands of innocent men even remotely resembling the sketches potentially vulnerable to possible harassment, assault or even incarceration for questioning.

The problem is this: The unclear images and videos have led to highly approximated sketches, left in considerable part to the imagination of their creators. These sketches can lead to any number of people with similar features with a cap, spectacles and a beard being assumed to be suspects. The doppelganger effect comes into play, except that it would be worse because the original images and video grabs have remained blurred yielding inaccurate details for the sketchers. And all these have gone far and wide, thanks to social media.

Normally, investigations involve sketch artists authorized by the investigators. These authorized sketch artists draw facial features based on descriptions given by eye-witnesses. But in the Rameshwaram cafe blast case, there were no

eye-witnesses per se, because the details came out much after the blast took place, thanks to cameras inside and outside the cafe. The video grabs and images were those of the suspect walking on the streets, in buses, at bus stands and at different locations as he was tracked — through CCTV footage obtained hours after he tread those paths — from Bengaluru to Tumakuru to Ballari to Bhatkal. Images and video clips continue to emerge even as you read this.

However, the Rs 10 lakh as reward dangling like a hefty carrot, combined with social media as a tool to quickly spread the sketches far and wide, could play havoc by fueling greed over the generous amount promised as reward. That is the reason why senior police officials have criticized these sketches, calling them "unsolicited" and "distracting".

Neither the NIA nor the police may have any estimate of the sudden proliferation of people acting as bounty hunters in pursuit of this suspect.

There was a case in the US Supreme Court in 1873 (Taylor Vs Taintor) which gave a degree of authority to bounty hunters to act as agents of bail-bond companies. The court, in that case, provided bounty hunters sweeping rights to pursue fugitives — even break into their houses without warrants — to apprehend them and hand them over to the jurisdictional authorities. Many of the targets in those cases were those who failed to appear in court in breach of the bail-bond agreements.

No such rights here, but Rs 10 lakh is not a small amount. Now, the NIA's reward has turned into a lottery of sorts with common folks in pursuit of this elusive man, with an eye on the money. While just one person is likely to win that "lottery" — if at all success is achieved while at it — a lot of innocents could likely suffer, mistaken to be that suspect, based on whatever resemblance that hapless victim holds to the man on the run.

Still, do not give up wearing your cap this scorching summer for fear of even vaguely resembling that fugitive.



NIRAD MUDUR
Deputy Resident Editor, Karnataka
niradmudur@newindianexpress.com

CM-headed panel clears proposals worth ₹17,835.9 cr

BENGALURU: The State High-Level Clearance Committee (SHLCC) headed by CM Siddaramaiah on Friday approved six new projects and eight additional investment proposals worth Rs 17,835.9 crore, with the potential to create 27,000 jobs in the state. The 63rd meeting of the SHLCC was held at CM's Home Office 'Krishna'. According to a statement, the SHLCC approved Wipro's proposal to invest Rs 2,095 crore and provide employment to 21,723 in the state.

CONGRESS FIELDS SHAFI TO ASSUAGE MUSLIMS

List of candidates out for 16 constituencies in Kerala; CPM trying to cash in on sentiment

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kozhikode

THE Congress zeroed in on a reluctant Shafi Parambil to take on CPM stalwart KK Shailaja in Vadakara to assuage the Muslim community miffed by the denial of an extra seat to the IUML. Shafi is the lone Muslim in the Congress candidate list announced on Friday for 16 constituencies in the state.

Keen to address the discontent in the minority community, the Congress had a few options before it to accommodate a Muslim candidate. Once it was decided that Congress general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal would contest from Alappuzha, where the party's sole Muslim candidate lost in 2019, the Congress was looking towards Wayanad should Rahul Gandhi decide to try his luck from somewhere outside the state.

However, with Rahul's candidature from Wayanad getting the nod, all eyes were on state Congress chief K Sudhakaran who had expressed reluctance to defend his Kannur seat. After the name of Sudhakaran was fixed for Kannur, the only

option left for the Congress was Vadakara. Padmaja Venugopal's entry to the BJP also came handy for the party to think of alternatives. Thus, Vadakara became the lone constituency from where the party could field a Muslim candidate.

The refusal to allot an additional seat for the IUML has been viewed as Congress' negative attitude towards the Muslim community, though it is not clear whether the League leadership sincerely wanted a third seat. All Muslim groups and even independent observers have registered protest over the Congress' stand. Though the IUML leadership was ready for a compromise on the offer of a Rajya Sabha seat, the sentiment of the community was against the Congress.

At the same time, the CPM was making an all-out attempt to cash in on the anti-Congress sentiment that was rampant in the community. Adding to the woes of the Congress, a section in the Sunni organisation Samastha Kerala Jem-Iyyathul Ulama, the traditional vote bank of the UDF, made its animosity to the IUML public.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

AFTER delays and speculation about tough negotiations happening behind the scenes, the DMK on Friday inked poll pacts with its allies Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), allocating them two and one Lok Sabha seats respectively to contest.

These were the same numbers allocated to them in 2019. Though both parties had de-

BJD leaders return from New Delhi, remain mum

BIJAY CHAKI @ Bhubaneswar

THE top leaders of the BJD, 5T chairman VK Pandian and party general secretary (organisation) Pranab Prakash Das, who had rushed to New Delhi for seat sharing talks with the national leadership of BJP returned to Bhubaneswar on Friday.

They reportedly had several rounds of discussions with the central leaders of BJP but talks seem to have stuck on some key Lok Sabha seats and Assembly constituencies from where both the parties want to contest. Both, however, remained tight-lipped on the issue.

"The alliance is decided. However, the issues to be thrashed out are the numbers and places. The negotiations might drag a little longer," said informed sources.

Sources in the BJD pointed out that the party wants a major share of the Assembly seats. It is important for the BJD because to maintain its strong footing in Assembly given its current numbers.

A senior leader told this paper that the BJD will not agree to less than 100 Assembly seats and leave the rest to the BJP. "The seat share ratio of 4:3 between the BJD and BJP in 2000 and 2004 elections will not be workable in this election as the ruling party currently is in a much stronger position than those years," said a regional party leader.

Sources said that negotiations over the prestigious Bhubaneswar and Puri Lok Sabha constituencies too have emerged a sticking point as BJD wants both the seats. Besides, though the ratio of LS seats ranging from 14-12 seats to the BJP and 7-9 seats to the BJD are doing the rounds, state leaders of both the parties do not seem to be on the same page. The Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha seat was with the BJD for five consecutive times since 1998 until it was wrested by the BJP in 2019.

manded extra seats, it was clear from the beginning that the DMK would not budge. However, DMK acceded to their demands to contest in their own symbols and not use the 'Rising Sun' symbol of the ruling party. In 2019, VCK, in one of its two constituencies, and MDMK contested in DMK's symbol. VCK's demand to allocate one general constituency was also not met.

For VCK, the poll agreement signed on Friday mentioned Cuddalore and Villupuram, the two reserved constituencies it

contested last time, as the tentative constituencies for the 2024 elections. MDMK's agreement did not mention the constituency. Party general secretary Vaiko said it will be decided later. Both VCK president Thol Thirumavalavan and Vaiko said the seat-sharing arrangement was satisfactory. VCK leaders were informed about the practical difficulties in accepting the party's demand. VCK leaders discussed among themselves in detail the DMK's offer and decided to accept it.



STUNT IN THE AIR

NCC cadets perform at the Officers' Training Academy in Chennai on Friday | EXPRESS

Centre rejects Kerala's demand for ₹19,370 cr additional borrowing

ENS @ T'Puram

ONCE again, the Kerala government will move the Supreme Court against the Union government as the latter has rejected the demand for borrowings worth ₹19,370 crore in addition to the ₹13,608 crore ordered by the Supreme Court.

The talks between the Union and state governments on the issue of additional borrowing space were held in Delhi on Friday as directed by the SC, which is hearing a petition filed by the state government challenging

the Centre's stand.

Chief Secretary V Venu, who led the Kerala delegation, told reporters that the Union finance secretary did not agree with the state's demand. Talking to the media in Delhi,

Venu said the reasons for seeking additional borrowing were clearly mentioned before the court. However the Union finance secretary did not agree to the demand, he said.

According to the state government, the Centre's calculation on the eligible borrowing space for the state was wrong. This includes the miscalcula-

tion of the funds parked in the public account, which was adjusted from the net borrowing ceiling.

Sources from the state government pointed out that Kerala was eligible for additional borrowing worth ₹19,370 crore. "Our request to the Union government was to rectify an error in the calculation of the borrowing space allocated to Kerala. The state has accepted the calculation based on principles endorsed by the Union government. However, it was discovered that the borrowing space allotted to the state was erroneously reduced by the Centre," said an official.

PUBLIC RIDICULE

Missing cushion on B'luru-Bhopal flight

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A missing cushion on the seat of an Indigo flight from Bengaluru to Bhopal on Wednesday became a subject of much fun and lighthearted ridicule on social media.

Flyer Yavanika Raj Shah's sarcastic post accompanied with a pic said, "Beautiful @IndiGo6E-I do hope I land safely! :) This is your flight from Bengaluru to Bhopal 6E 6465." The post has gone viral with 1.5 million views and 13,000 likes.

Bengaluru-based banker Abay Zachariah responded: "The seat cushions had come loose in the last two indigo flights I flew. This problem seems rampant with Indigo."

"Pay for cushion" was a recurring response among many netizens. Mumbai-based Larissa Fernand used a smiling emoji accompanying this comment: "May be the previous passengers carried them off."

A humorous response from the handle Thiru_vee said: "Now the election season is going on..So seats are very costly."

Confirming the incident, Indigo in a statement, said, "We are aware of an image taken in flight 6E 6465, operating between Bengaluru and Bhopal. The cushion cover was soiled



The missing cushion on the Bengaluru to Bhopal Indigo flight

during the previous flight. The cushion was removed and replaced with a new one before the flight departed for the next sector. The passenger was informed accordingly."

A similar incident was reported along the Bengaluru route by Mensa Foods founder Anantha Narayan with a photo of seats on December 2 last year with the comment: "2 hours late and no seats. @Indigo flight 5047! Service really seems to be deteriorating."

Ernakulam-B'luru Vande Bharat train diverted to TN

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kochi

KERALA has got a raw deal yet again from the Indian Railways after the much-hyped Ernakulam-Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express was diverted from the Trivandrum division to run on the Mysuru-Chennai route.

"A new Vande Bharat rake which was allotted to Trivandrum division is now diverted to South Western Railway. The rake which was meant for Ernakulam-Bengaluru Service has been taken away to run a new service from Mysuru," Ernakulam MP Hibi Eden said, in a letter to Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Railways.

He said he had written to the railway authorities seeking launch of Kochi-Bengaluru Vande Bharat citing the importance of such a service. I don't have anything against Railways launching new trains or services to anywhere in the country. But diverting a rake to another zone, which was originally allotted to Trivandrum division is a grave injustice to us. I earnestly urge you to intervene in the matter and ensure the immediate allocation of a new Vande Bharat rake for the Bengaluru-Ernakulam service," Hibi said.

According to him, the Railway Minister and top Railway officials had time and again notified that running the Vande Bharat train on the Ernakulam-Bengaluru route would be beneficial for both the passengers and the railways, based on statistics.

"The Railway Minister was convinced. Even the rake for the same was brought to Thiruvananthapuram. This had been unofficially confirmed by the railway authorities and an official announcement was pending," he added.

'Minor sexually assaulted for 3 yrs'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

IN the meantime, the woman filed a complaint with the police accusing the swamiji and his associate of sexually assaulting her.

"She was allegedly sexually assaulted for three years. She was a minor when she was abused. The swamiji was in touch with her till January 2024. She just turned major and we have taken action against the accused under the POCSO Act," Ashok told TNIE.

According to sources, the SP launched the late night operation as the swamiji is highly influential and enjoys the support of several top politicians in the state.

chill summer

TRIPLE COOL OFFER

Naturally Cool Latex 1 Inch Comfort Layer
+ Upgrade to Japanese Yarn upto 4 Degree Cooler Fabric
+ Free 18 Litres Slim Air Cooler

NATURALLY COOL PINCORE LATEX

Combination of 100% Natural Latex
+ Pressure Absorbing Hypersensitive Foam
+ Anti Sag High Resilience Base Layer

neev MATTRESS
Foundation of great sleep

JAPANESE YARN FABRIC
Upto 4 Degree Cooler Fabric

SWEAT FREE SLEEP SURFACE

₹19900 7 INCHES QUEEN SIZE
+ 18% GST | Offer Period **8-10 Mar**

Free air cooler
18 Litres Slim Aircooler

Scan to register for Free Home Demo

Brand Store: Rajajinagar | Basvangudi
Call: 7338021446, 9686681034

EXPRESS READ

Gold worth ₹1 cr recovered from bin

Tiruchy: Sleuths of the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) of the Customs on Friday recovered gold, estimated to be worth Rs 1 crore, found dumped in a garbage bin at a restroom in the arrival section of the Tiruchy international airport.

A passenger has been detained in connection with the incident. Following an alert about a packet of gold in paste form by sanitation workers, the customs team checked the package to find 1.56 kg of gold worth Rs 1.03 crore in it.

KSRTC bus driver averts major mishap

Mangaluru: A major mishap was averted thanks to the presence of mind of a KSRTC bus driver on Charamdi ghat in Belthangady taluk in Dakshina Kannada on Friday morning. The incident occurred when the KSRTC bus was enroute from Chikkamagaluru to Mangaluru. On the ghat section, the driver noticed brake failure and immediately alerted the passengers and asked them not to panic. By maneuvering the bus and hitting a divider, he managed to stop the bus. All 70 passengers onboard were unharmed.



You can do a lot with diplomacy, but with diplomacy backed up by force you can get a lot more done

Kofi Annan



INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

INCREASE WOMEN IN WORKFORCE TO KEEP UNEMPLOYMENT LOW

ADDITION to the recent trend of positive economic news, it was announced that India's unemployment rate fell to 3.1 percent in 2023. The improved employment scenario comes close on the heels of higher-than-anticipated GDP growth, confirming the historical belief that jobs and growth go hand in hand. Curiously, the National Statistics Office walked an extra mile releasing jobs data for the calendar year—a first in its history—as against the tradition of publishing data for the July-June year. If the high unemployment rate ahead of the 2019 general elections led to a contentious debate with the government tossing it in the bin, the latest dispatch coming just before 2024 elections will likely be showcased as a major accomplishment.

A decade ago, Narendra Modi ran for prime minister with the promise of creating 10 million jobs every year. While he is yet to make good of the promise, it's certain that job creation will remain one of the key poll planks. One of the notable data points in the latest unemployment numbers is the reduced gap between the labour force and the workforce. While 2023 saw a 59.8 percent labour force participation rate, or those who are actually working or willing to work, the total workforce, or those actually engaged in some form of work, stood at 58 percent. In other words, if the available work pool is 60, 58 are meaningfully employed. This is good news, as the gap was higher in previous years.

While the official data shows all is well on the jobs front, private estimates indicate otherwise. According to CMIE's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey, the unemployment rate rose to 8 percent in February 2024 from 6.8 percent in January. What's more unsettling is that unemployment eased in urban India, but rose sharply in rural areas to 7.8 percent, perhaps due to the dismal growth in the agriculture sector, which is delaying rural economic recovery. Besides, the CMIE data also shows a rise in youth unemployment during October-December 2023, while in 30-34 age bracket it touched a 10-quarter high of 2.49 percent. Clearly, two aspects need attention. One, the female labour force currently stands at less than a quarter and needs to be strengthened. Two, more than 10 million Indians join the workforce every year, which means job creation should keep pace to sustain the low unemployment rate.

CHILD'S MURDER CALLS FOR CLOSER TAB ON DRUG RINGS

THE ghastly murder and sexual harassment of a nine-year-old girl has shaken the conscience of Puducherry. A day after her body was laid to rest amid huge outrage, life in the tourist city came to a halt on Friday as the opposition parties called for a bandh. Protesters marched to the Raj Nivas, attempting to break the security cordon and raising slogans against the Lt Governor, the administrator of the Union territory, Chief Minister N Rangasamy and Home Minister A Namassivayam. What has irked people is the thriving drug mafia in the city and the initial apathy of cops that led to a tardy investigation in the missing-girl complaint.

Quick parallels are drawn between the increasing number of POC SO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act) cases and the lack of measures in eradicating the drug menace. When the girl went missing on March 2, the family approached the local police. But despite CCTV footage showing the girl, the search did not yield any outcome. Her decomposed body was finally found in a drain near her house on March 5. Two suspects, allegedly drug peddlers, have been booked under the Penal Code sections for murder, kidnap, wrongful confinement and causing disappearance of evidence. The POC SO Act and the Prevention of Atrocities against Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Act have also been invoked. The massive outrage and the emotionally-charged funeral procession have now forced the administration to act; two police officers have been transferred.

The news of the girl's murder and sexual assault comes on the heels of a few major drug hauls in Tamil Nadu that has inevitably stirred a political war. Directorate of Revenue Intelligence sleuths and the Coast Guard seized 99 kg of hashish that was being smuggled to Sri Lanka. They also recovered 36 kg of methamphetamine worth ₹180 crore from a couple—about 30 kg in Madurai and the rest from a dump yard in Chennai. The ruling DMK recently sacked a functionary, Jaffer Sadiq, from the party's primary membership amid allegations of his links with a large international drug cartel that was jointly busted by the Delhi Police and Narcotics Control Bureau. The hauls show that cops and other authorities are staying vigilant, but they ought to take more stringent action against peddlers and other offenders. Creating awareness among students is equally important.

QUICK TAKE

PROTECT UNDERSEA CABLES

THREE of India's 30-plus under-sea cables were recently disrupted by targeted attacks off the Yemen coast. Subsea cables are among the most strategic assets for any country—they carry almost all of the international voice and electronic data and are used to make over \$10-trillion transactions every day. Experts have warned any more disruption would trouble India's connectivity with the rest of the world. Suggestions for protecting them include putting them under the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre and establishing submarine cable protection zones. India not only needs to increase surveillance within its nautical boundaries, but needs to work with others to protect them far from shore.

THE birth of the United Nations in 1945, and its multiple agencies thereafter, gave rise to the post-World War II notion of "world order" and the concept of "multilateralism". This meant multiple countries around the world engaging with each other under the aegis of global institutions, underpinned by consensus on global norms and the values underpinning those norms. The existence of an ordered world was intended to provide the space to identify threats, foster cooperation, and as far as possible, to prevent conflict and help contain it if it occurred. As Dag Hammarskjöld once put it, "The UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell." That it can broadly be said to have done for many decades. After all, we have not had a Third World War.

However, today's world is one of polycrisis, where the very basic assumptions of this structure have been challenged. Neither have conflicts been averted before they become critical, nor has cooperation been properly fostered, with global institutions unable to transcend the disagreements among key member states. And the system itself has not evolved in step with the emergence of newer forces on the global scene.

Humanity is precariously close to the hell that Hammarskjöld wanted the UN to prevent. Geopolitics is bedevilled by major conflicts of global resonance, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the brutal conflict in Gaza both impacting countries around the world.

There is also a crisis of values. When Francis Fukuyama wrote *The End of History* and the world celebrated the rise of liberal democracy and capitalism as the time-affirmed ideal form of social, political and economic organisation, few anticipated a destructive backlash to the very globalisation that was seen as the harbinger of world prosperity. From the rise of Trump in America, Netanyahu in Israel and Erdogan in Turkey, to the gains made by the right in Germany, Greece and France, we are seeing an uptick in the popularity of populism, predicated on a resentment of globalisation, topped off by the cultural grammar of hyper-nationalism. The existence of groups like QAnon in America or the neo-Nazi Third Path in Germany would have been unthinkable even as recently as the end of the Cold War.

Meanwhile, the world has changed in ways that the UN has not kept up with. The "decline of the West" is still debateable but the "rise of the rest" is not. The so-called Middle Powers have found considerable diplomatic leeway since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of China. From cli-

mate financing to digital infrastructure and global public goods, the developing world has found the space (and in many cases, the capability) to make its voice heard. The Voice of the Global South summit under India's G20 presidency signified the growing space for the developing world to express itself, unencumbered by the need to placate one global hegemon or another. The Global South's increasing prowess in innovation, sustainability and entrepreneurship, combined with its significant demographic advantage, gives these countries the leverage to be what Foreign Minister S Jaishankar called "non-West" without being anti-West.

The rise of the Global South points to both the weaknesses of the current world order and shows that countries that earlier lacked the wherewithal to contribute to the

THE OLD GLOBAL ORDER GIVING WAY TO THE NEW

SHASHI THAROOR



Third-term Lok Sabha MP from Thiruvananthapuram and the Sahitya-Akademi winning author of 24 books, most recently *Ambedkar: A Life*



SOURAV ROY

mate financing to digital infrastructure and global public goods, the developing world has found the space (and in many cases, the capability) to make its voice heard. The Voice of the Global South summit under India's G20 presidency signified the growing space for the developing world to express itself, unencumbered by the need to placate one global hegemon or another. The Global South's increasing prowess in innovation, sustainability and entrepreneurship, combined with its significant demographic advantage, gives these countries the leverage to be what Foreign Minister S Jaishankar called "non-West" without being anti-West.

The rise of the Global South points to both the weaknesses of the current world order and shows that countries that earlier lacked the wherewithal to contribute to the

global system are now expressing themselves at the table, rather than just being on the menu. But the question of institutional reform remains contested, and consensus is unlikely to emerge anytime soon. If the UN is looking out of date, and the question of reform is likely to be fraught for a long time to come, can the G20 offer a pathway to global governance outside the established paradigm? After all, the G20 also reflects a major transition in how diplomacy is conducted and global outcomes are shaped. There is a visible shift to issue-based 'plurilateralism'. The conscious choice of countries to engage in dialogue on global issues in "mini-laterals" like BRICS, SCO, the Quad and others exhibits the comfort inherent in dealing with countries on their own terms, outside the structure of global governance

RIHANNA AND RISHI: A TALE OF TWO WEDDINGS

MADHAVAN NARAYANAN



Senior journalist

REVERSE SWING

crack the obligatory Rajni joke: "The wedding attended Rajnikanth."

But then, this bash or the one held in 1991 are not the wedding-do I regret not attending. Fate throws curve balls at you. Sometimes, it has a reverse swing. We tut-tut too late about missing a big chance. My chance came in 2009. Smartphones were here, so were selfies, and there was, in hindsight, the occasion of a lifetime. And I blew it. Trust N R Narayana Murthy to underplay everything with his family's trademark simplicity and spoil our chance.



The range of reactions to the razzmatazz of the Anant-Radhika pre-wedding bash and the underplayed dignity of the Akshata-Rishi nuptials can be confusing. We Indians love to gossip as much about opulence as about simplicity. What connects us is our tendency to be argumentative Indians

I received in August 2009 an email from the Infosys founder and chairman, whom I have known directly, a personal note. "Dear Madhavan," it began, and went on to mention that his daughter Akshata was "getting married to her classmate from Stanford Business School, Rishi Sunak". It added: "Rishi was born and raised in England."

I wished Murthy and his wife Sudha all the best for the wedding reception at the Leela Palace in Bengaluru, congratulated

him on his "arrival of a different kind" and added I would try to make it, but "it looks difficult at the moment". I could not, or rather did not, go. It was indeed an arrival of a different kind. No Bollywood star that I recall being mentioned. No iconic firangi singer. No dancing Khan. Only, the groom happened to be the future prime minister of the United Kingdom.

Having been personally shown around the Infosys campus once by the magnanimous Murthy, and enjoyed his self-deprecating jokes about our middle-class value-for-money culture, the contrast between the two weddings is striking in more ways than one. "Hong Kong shopkeepers don't like us," he said once. "They look away because they know we ask for the price and won't buy."

Between the Rihanna-infused razzmatazz at Jamnagar and the underplayed—and I suspect unsuspecting—dignity of the Akshata-Rishi wedding, I am kind of confused. It is not for nothing that they say: "For everything you say about India, the opposite is also true."

The three-day pre-wedding bash for the Anant-Radhika wedding due only in July is estimated at a ballpark figure of ₹1,000 crore. I have joked with Murthy about an Infosys rival making a corporate acquisition with 2 percent of that amount.

Last month, a picture of Murthy enjoying an ice-cream at a Bengaluru parlour with his daughter Akshata went viral. We Indians love to gossip as much about opulence as simplicity, as you can see from the Simple Sudha memes on Akshata's mother. What connects us all, perhaps, is our tendency to be argumentative Indians.

As for me, I can only say that between the two wedding invitations from my past, there was one in which I did not even need to express regret, while the other is one I truly regret not attending. I should have found time and put in some labour—though that is not a word Sunak would appreciate in his current predicament.

(Views are personal)
(On X @madversity)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Law's reach

Ref: *Prosecute the corrupt, but protect free speech in legislatures* (March 8). The Supreme Court's ruling that parliamentary privilege or immunity does not protect legislators who take bribes to vote or speak in parliament affirms the principle that no individual is above the law. The landmark judgement underscores the judiciary's commitment to upholding the rule of law.
R Sivakumar, Chennai

Gender bias

Ref: *She's got no ticket to ride* (March 8). Though many women are interested in becoming politicians, their aspirations are weighed down by societal expectations. Even if parties decide to increase the number of tickets given to women, how many will be able to come forward and accept it, given the societal attitudes?
P Prema, Thanjavur

Increase representation

Increasing women's participation in politics will foster a more balanced approach to policymaking. Though 50 percent reservation has been made in Panchayati Raj institutions, there is no apparent reason why it shouldn't be replicated in state and national legislatures that have more impact on shaping the destiny of India.
Sachidananda Satpathy, Sambalpur

AI concerns

Ref: *Cabinet clears '10K crore to boost AI ecosystem* (March 8). There are valid concerns about the negative effects of AI. However, the development of AI is inevitable as it can perform tasks with increased speed and accuracy. One thing to keep in mind is to develop such systems in such a way that they complement or enhance human capabilities rather than outrightly replacing humans.
Ravi Nair, Kollengode

Spend well

Ref: *Big relief for Kerala, SC directs sanction of '13,608 crore additional borrowing* (March 6). One hopes the Kerala government will put the money to good use. There are many issues like increasing wildlife attacks on humans in various parts of the state, increasing welfare pensions for the poor, and so on.
Elizabeth Koshy, Pathanamthitta

Double-edged sword

Kerala Congress's former stalwart K Karunakaran's daughter Padmaja Venugopal has joined the BJP. Though such an influx may help the BJP widen its influence, the party bigwigs must also be mindful that turncoats can at times do more damage than good.
M Pradyu, Kannur



Rajnath Singh @rajnathsingh

Article 370 movie shows how complex this problem was and how challenging the solution was and it also presents a good example of women empowerment



Rahul Gandhi @RahulGandhi

Congress's guarantee is a ray of light for the youth who are immersed in the darkness of despair due to Narendra Modi's 'abolish jobs' campaign.



D. Raja @ComradeDRaja

As a mark of respect for the struggle for gender justice, we demand that the Women's Reservation Act be implemented immediately.

Aims at enhancing DRDO-developed long-range offensive artillery capabilities along LAC

Army to raise 2 Pinaka regiments

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

THE Indian Army is set to significantly enhance its long-range offensive artillery capabilities along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China by raising and deploying two new regiments of Pinaka Multi Launch Rocket Systems. These long-range vectors, designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), will deliver a high volume of firepower precisely and swiftly deep into enemy territory.

Sources have confirmed that the raising of these regiments will be completed within this year. "The Indian Army will be raising two new regiments of indigenously developed and produced Pinaka Multiple Launch Rocket Systems in the next 6-9 months," said sources. Training for personnel in these regiments is currently underway.

While the initial plan was to raise these regiments by 2024, sources indicate that the process for raising two of them is ongoing and will be completed in the next few months.

Tensions along the LAC persist, prompting precautionary deployments since the May 2020 stand-off in Eastern Ladakh. As part of the six sanctioned Pinaka regiments, the

Each artillery has 3 batteries of 6 Pinaka launchers

1 battery can fire a salvo of 72 rockets in 44 seconds

An upgraded version of Pinaka ammunition can land up to a range of 75km with superior precision

Army now operates 4 Pinaka regiments along Pak border and the northern border with China

TRAINING FOR PERSONNEL



Contracts signed in '20 at approximate cost of ₹2580cr

Six regiments include 114 launchers, 45 command posts, 330 Vehicles

Goal: Phase out Grad BM-21 rocket systems for Pinaka

Deployment will be completed within this year

Complements existing artillery like Bofors and Howitzer

TO BE ARMY'S MAINSTAY IN LONG-RANGE ARTILLERY

214-mm multi-barrel rocket launch system will be deployed on the northern borders with China amid the ongoing border stand-off. Currently, the Indian Army operates four Pinaka regiments along the western border with Pakistan and the northern border with China.

In artillery, a unit is also referred to as a regiment, with each regiment consisting of three batteries of six Pinaka launchers. A battery of six Pinaka launchers can fire a salvo of 72 rockets in 44 seconds, neutralizing enemy assets in an area of 1000m by 800m. Moreover, an upgraded version of Pinaka ammunition can land up to a range of 75km with superior precision.

In 2018, the Defence Acquisition Council, the highest decision-making body of the defence ministry, approved six additional Pinaka regiments. Contracts were signed in 2020 with Bharat Earth Movers Ltd. (BEML) and private sector entities Tata Power Company Limited and Larsen & Toubro (L&T) for its supply to the Regiment of Artillery at an approximate cost of Rs 2580 crore.

The introduction of Pinaka will augment the Army's long-range offensive deployment along the northern borders, complementing artillery guns such as Bofors and Ultra Light Howitzer M777, and upgraded L-70 air defence guns.

These six Pinaka Regiments

will comprise 114 launchers with Automated Gun Aiming & Positioning System (AGAPS), 45 Command Posts to be procured from TPCL and L&T, and 330 Vehicles to be procured from BEML.

As part of the long-term goal to phase out old Russia-origin Grad BM-21 rocket systems, the Indian Army aims to have 22 regiments of Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launch systems, equipped with automated gun-aiming and positioning systems, and command posts.

In the realm of long-range rocket artillery, the indigenously developed Pinaka is set to become the backbone of the Indian Army's firepower arsenal.

SC to hear SBI's petition on electoral bonds on March 11

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court would hear on March 11, the plea filed by the State Bank of India (SBI) seeking extension of time till June 30 to give details of all electoral bonds encashed from April 2019 onwards.

The court would also hear the contempt plea filed by ADR (Association of Democratic Reforms) on the same day against the SBI. A five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavi, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, would hear the plea on Monday.

On March 4, the SBI moved the top court seeking a direction for extension of time till June 30, 2024, to furnish information regarding electoral bonds to the ECI.

In a landmark judgment on February 15, the SC directed SBI to furnish the information to the ECI by March 6. But it had so far failed in doing so. In the verdict, the court had said that the electoral bonds scheme had to be struck down as unconstitutional, and directed banks to stop issuing bonds. "The Union has been unable to establish that the measure

ALSO IN TOP COURT

Appeal against Saibaba's acquittal

The Supreme Court will hear the appeal filed by Maharashtra government against the acquittal of former DU professor GN Saibaba and five other accused persons in an alleged Maoist link case, on March 11. The govt had knocked the doors of the SC against the order of the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High court.

SC to hear Mahua's plea on Monday

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a plea moved by TMC leader Mahua Moitra challenging her expulsion from the Lok Sabha on Monday. The bench will hear the plea, in which the court had earlier refused to grant interim relief to Moitra, who had sought permission to attend the LS proceedings till the final adjudication.

adopted in clause 7(4)(1) of the electoral scheme is the least restrictive measure," a five-judge bench had said in the order.

In a similar development in the case, the ADR, which is the lead petitioner in the case, had on Thursday knocked the doors of the Supreme Court seeking its direction for initiation of contempt of court proceedings against the SBI for failing to disclose the data as directed by the SC by March 6.

In its plea filed before the top court, the ADR said that the SBI has illegally, wilfully and deliberately disobeyed the apex court's judgment in the case.

The ADR, in its plea, alleged that the SBI application is "malafide and demonstrates wilful and deliberate disobedience and defiance of the judgment". "Defiant approach by SBI towards citizen's Right to know, is reprehensible and betrays its motive to stifle citizen's voice and right to audit actions of the political class," the ADR stated.

The contempt plea alleged that the data is easily available with the SBI, but it had failed to act as directed by the court. It has thereby sought the court's direction for disclosure of bond data by the SBI forthwith.

Right To Apprenticeship to ensure 'dignity with skilling': Chakravarty

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE Congress promise of legal right to apprenticeships for youth is a unique step and a first of its kind in the world, according to Praveen Chakravarty, chairman of the All India Professionals' Congress and a member of the party's manifesto committee.

Rahul Gandhi, while unveiling the five guarantees for youth, announced that every young diploma and degree-holder below the age of 25 will have the right to apprenticeships in the private or government sectors. During the one-year apprenticeship, they will be paid ₹1 lakh or ₹8,500 monthly and it will be backed by law, said Gandhi.

Though Germany has an apprenticeship programme, it has not made it a legal right, Chakravarty said. "No country has made it a legal right," he said. It is about "dignity and skilling rather than giving money to the unemployed youth."

"This is not about giving money to the unemployed. There is a bigger philosophy here and it is all about aspiration," he said. The cost of the apprenticeship will be shared between the government and

First of its kind in the world

Congress has promised to bring in a law to make apprenticeships for youth a legal right



Apprenticeship—paid job-training will be offered in the private or govt sector

Who can avail? Young diploma and degree-holder below age of 25

SALARY ₹1 lakh OR ₹8,500 MONTHLY

WHY? SKILL TRAINING TO MAKE YOUTH EMPLOYABLE

COST? TO BE SHARED BETWEEN THE GOVT AND THE EMPLOYER

the employer, according to the Congress leader.

The idea of the 'Right to Apprenticeship' came about after a month-long brainstorming with domain experts across the world, said Chakravarty.

"I and P Chidambaram, chairman of the manifesto committee, have consulted more than 20 experts in various fields across the world and India. We have consulted economists Jean Dreze, Santosh Mehrotra, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, and academicians from Harvard University, University of Chicago, and Cam-



"This is not about giving money to the unemployed... it is all about aspiration."

Praveen Chakravarty, Chairman of the All India Professionals' Congress

bridge. We are absolutely confident that it'll work. When we brought in the NREGA scheme, there were a lot of skeptics. Now, 15 years later, it's a big success," said Chakravarty.

To implement the promise, existing educational systems and the National Apprentices Act of 1961, have been reviewed, he said. Apart from apprenticeship, the party also has promised filling of 30 lakh government vacancies, freedom from paper leaks, social security for gig workers and the startup fund for youths below 40 years of age.

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

AHEAD of Lok Sabha polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged content creators to encourage first-time voters (FTVs) for exercising their franchise and create awareness against drug addiction among the youth through creative contents. "You all should create more content on drug awareness. Your creativity can explain to people very well that drugs are not cool," Modi said after giving the first-ever National Creators Awards.

Highlighting how India's culture is shaping a way for the world, he asked the content creators to start a "create on India movement" and share stories on the country's culture, heritage and traditions with the world. "Let us create on India, create for the world," he said.

Describing the content creators as the country's digital ambassadors, Modi said they have also emerged as brand ambassadors of "vocal for local" as the world's curiosity towards India has grown in the last 10 years. The PM advised them to develop work in UN languages, such as German, French, Spanish and others, amplifying India's "grandeur and talents" to a new height.



PM Narendra Modi presents the Heritage Fashion Icon award to Jahnavi Singh at the National Creators Awards 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Friday | PTI

"Create awareness among youngsters and first-time voters to participate in the electoral exercise of the country and make India a 'viksit bharat'," he urged creators. "I give you the guarantee that on the next Shivratra, it will be me who will preside over such a programme of honouring the next batch of content creators."

He noted that even though many countries became prosperous in different ways, they eventually opted for democracy. "India has taken the resolve to become a developed nation by taking pride in 100 per

cent democracy," Modi said. He dwelt upon the Semiconductor Mission exuding confidence that India will lead the way akin to the adoption of 5G technology.

The PM urged the creators to amplify "nari shakti", exhibiting how a mother conducts her daily tasks and women from rural and tribal areas engage in economic activity.

Prominent among those awarded were Pankhti Pandey, who got the award in the "Green Champion" category, Keerthika Govindasamy in the "Best Storyteller" segment, singer Maithili Thakur got the "Cul-

tural Ambassador of the Year" award, Gaurav Chaudhary bagged the honour in the "Best Creator in Tech" category and Kamiya Jani was felicitated as the "Favourite Travel Creator".

More than 1.5 lakh nominations across 20 categories were received for the awards. Subsequently, about 10 lakh votes were cast for digital creators in various categories. Finally, 23 winners, including three international creators, were selected. Those awarded included Ranver Allahbadia, who was named the "Disruptor of the Year", Jaya Kishor who was given the award for "Best Creative for Social Change", Lakshya Dabas who bagged the honour of the "Most Impactful Agri Creator".

The "Best International Creator Award" was won by Kiri Paul from Tanzania, Drew Hicks from the US and Cassandra Mae Spittmann from Germany. Hicks received the award from Modi.

The "New India Champion" award was given to Abhi and Niyu, the "Heritage Fashion Icon Award" to Jahnavi Singh, the "Best Creative Creator" (female) award went to Shradha and RJ Raunaq received the "Best Creative Creator" (male) award.

Russia told to act against agents who lured Indian youth to join army: MEA

YESHI SELI/MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has firmly taken up with the Russian government the human trafficking syndicate issue and initiated action against agents who recruited Indian nationals as support staff of the Russian Army on false promises.

Two Indian nationals have died while many others remain in Russia, duped by agents in lure of jobs which turned out to be support staff of the Russian army. "Several Indian nationals have been duped to work with the Russian Army. We have taken up the matter with the Russian government for early discharge of such Indian nationals," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

Meanwhile, a day after busting the human trafficking syndicate, the CBI has put under its scanner two Russia-based agents who were involved in transporting gullible Indian youth to that country and pushing them into the Ukraine war

zone, officials said.

According to CBI officials, the agents based in Russia allegedly confiscated the passports of Indians arriving in that country. They forced them to join the Russia-Ukraine war in combat roles. A senior CBI official said, "Christina and Moinuddin Chippa, an Indian national, are based in Russia and were facilitating the trafficking of Indian youth to that country by offering them lucrative job opportunities there."

On Thursday, the CBI registered an FIR concerning the case as the agency has listed 17 Visa consultancy companies, their owners and agents spread across India. All the accused have been booked under IPC sections related to criminal conspiracy, cheating and human trafficking.

It has alleged that the accused, through their agents trafficked Indian nationals to Russia on the pretext of getting jobs related to the Russian Army, helpers, better life, and education and a vast amount was charged from these people illegally.

NMC says biometric attendance aims at weeding out ghost faculty

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

THE National Medical Commission on Thursday said that the mandatory Aadhaar-enabled biometric attendance system (AEBAS) for faculty and doctors is not to harass them but to weed out ghost faculty.

"This system is not to harass the doctors or students. It is to make sure that genuine doctors and faculty members are working in the medical college. There should not be any ghost faculty," said Dr. (Prof.) B. Srinivas, Secretary, NMC.

Allying the fears of doctors that they will have to mark their attendance at all times, Srinivas said that the faculty must do it once a day.

He said that the biometric attendance system would help the faculty and doctors by taking them away from the inspector Raj system and into a digitally-driven system.

"We wanted transparency in the system. The idea is to confirm whether they are present in the medical college. With this system, there will be no issue of manipulating the data," he said about the AEBAS por-



tal, which will be available on the NMC site.

From March 8, colleges will have to upload their data on the portal themselves, said Dr. Aruna Vanikar, President of the Undergraduate Medical Education Board (UGMEB), NMC. Once colleges authenticate these data, they will be visible to the public, she added.

However, the unique ID will only be given to colleges registered under AEBAS.

Several medical associations took up the issue of mandatory biometric attendance for doctors and faculty. Dr. Rohan Krishnan, national chairman of the Federation of All India

Medical Association (FAIMA) said, "It is a good measure by the NMC to introduce attendance only once because many times doctors are busy in some work in the hospital, which requires his/her immediate attention as their priority is to save the lives of the patient."

The AEBAS was made mandatory by the NMC in its Minimum Requirements for Annual MBBS Admissions Regulations, 2020. According to Dr. Vanikar, the new portal will be linked with the 'command and control centre' of NMC per the regulations. Colleges have also been mandated to install cameras and to be linked with the IT system of NMC.

She added that one of the major reason of mandating AEBAS was to revive the dignity of the medical profession.

She said medical colleges were reluctant to follow the regulation. "They came up with several excuses such as the system is full of flaws or that older aged faculty were not able to register their attendance," she said. However, she said, these issues were resolved by continuous interactions.

Indian team meets former Prez Karzai in Kabul, talks economy & Afghanistan ties

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

AN Indian diplomatic delegation recently visited Kabul, engaging in bilateral talks with senior leaders and former President Hamid Karzai.

"The delegation was led by MEA Joint Secretary PAI (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran). India opened a technical mission in Kabul in June 2022, and since then, it has been facilitating and coordinating our ongoing humanitarian assistance endeavors," said Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal.

The delegation met with senior Afghan authorities, representatives of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and members of the Afghan business community.

"The delegation held discussions on India's humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan and also discussed the use of Chabahar port by Afghan traders," added Jaiswal.

India has had historical and civilizational ties with the Afghan people, and these long-

standing linkages will continue to guide their approach towards the country. Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Abdul Qahar Balkhi, spoke about the delegation's visit to their country and their interactions with Afghanistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maulvi Amir Khan Muttaqi.

"Economic and transit issues were discussed comprehensively. Describing the relations between India and Afghanistan as historic, Mr. JP Singh stated that India has provided humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in various areas over the past two and a half years. He also commended our efforts in ensuring overall security and stability and countering narcotics," said Balkhi.

India is interested in expanding political and economic cooperation with Afghanistan via the Chabahar port. With Afghanistan's balanced foreign policy, there is a need to strengthen political and economic ties, said Balkhi, adding that the Indian government can provide useful consultations to Afghanistan.

POLL TIME: Parties engage in hectic parleys over stitching up alliance as election dates may be announced anytime soon



BJP, Shinde Maha spar continues

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THE BJP and Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on Friday continued their war of words, indicating discontent over seat sharing for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Deputy chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnis said, "BJP has 105 MLAs and is the single-largest party, still the party made Eknath Shinde, who has support of only 44 MLAs, chief minister of Maharashtra."

He said the alliance partners should be realistic while asking for more seats. Reacting to Fadnis's statement, Shiv Sena (Shinde) MLA Sanjay Shirsat said, "Eknath Shinde revolted, therefore BJP came in power in Maharashtra; otherwise it would have remained in the Opposition."

He said the BJP should not try to take credit for supporting Shinde. "It was a necessity for both the parties and so credit should be given to both," Shirsat said.

He said Uddhav Thackeray had insisted on equal power sharing formula with the BJP

in 2019, though Union home minister Amit Shah had said no such agreement had been made.

"BJP had agreed to have equal power sharing in Maharashtra and even offered the chief minister post for two and a half years, but Uddhav Thackeray refused to accept it. Uddhav wanted the chief minister post for five years and Sharad Pawar offered it," said Shirsat.

Earlier, Sena (Shinde) leader Ramdas Kadam had accused the BJP of trying to finish its allies by offering them less seats in Lok Sabha polls. With-out naming Kadam, union minister Narayan Rane said, "BJP always works for its allies and honours the colleagues. We never finish allies."

Meanwhile, CM Shinde and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar flew to Delhi to discuss seat sharing with top leadership of BJP. Shinde and Pawar are unhappy over eight and four seats offered to them.

The BJP, the Shiv Sena, and the NCP, coalesced in governing Maharashtra, are deliberating the intricate details of the coalition for the Lok Sabha elections.

Setback to Oppn alliance as NC snaps PDP ties

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

SIGNALLING the break-up of INDIA bloc and end of Gupkar Alliance in Jammu and Kashmir, National Conference and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday ruled out alliance with PDP for Lok Sabha polls in J&K and launched a scathing attack on Mehbooba Mufti's party for not following the "coalition dharma".

However, NC has kept the door open for alliance in Assembly polls. "We have short-listed candidates for three Valley seats and an announcement will be made at the appropriate time," Omar said.

When asked whether PDP was kept out, he said, "We have not kept PDP out. The situation has kept PDP out of this election."

The PDP had been insisting on INDIA bloc parties (NC and Congress) to leave Anantnag-Rajouri seat for the party.

BJP, SAD may declare alliance on Badal Sr death anniversary

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

AFTER ensuring the merger of Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) and Jayant Chaudhary's Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) into the NDA fold, the BJP is now eyeing a pact with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab.

While interacting with the media, Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar on Friday said that the masses want the BJP-SAD alliance, but the party is ready to contest all the 13 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Speculation is rife that BJP national president JP Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah may attend the first death anniversary of late chief minister and SAD patriarch Parkash Singh Badal on March 10. Jakhar also flagged off 'Viksit Bharat Modi ki guarantee' video vans displaying pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nadda, for gathering sug-



gestions from the people for the party's "sankalp patra" (manifesto) for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Of the several vans fitted with LED screens, two would visit each of the 13 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state. A mobile number has also been mentioned on the vans, on which the people can either register their suggestions through a voice message or drop it in a box. Asked if an alliance between BJP and SAD will benefit the saffron party,

Jakhar said: "It is not about a party gaining something but about the state and its people. We are ready to contest all 13 seats in Punjab, but the masses want the BJP-SAD alliance to happen. The regional parties like Akali Dal play a crucial role in raising the demands of the locals."

On senior BJP leader and former Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh playing a key role in stitching an alliance between the SAD and the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, he said the party high command will take a final decision on that," he said.

To another question, how soon Patiala MP Preet Kaur, wife of former CM Capt Amarinder Singh, is expected to join the BJP, Jakhar said the joining will happen in Delhi.

Taking a dig at the Congress and AAP, he said the two played a 'friendly match'.

'Exit of one leader makes way for another in Cong'

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA

@ Ahmedabad

AMID the continuing exodus of its leaders to the BJP in Gujarat, the Congress on Friday asserted that the resignations have not affected the party but helped fresh faces and talent come to the fore.

While Congress leader Rahul Gandhi carried out his Bharat Jodo Nyaya Yatra in Gujarat, the party remained vigilant

about the issue of leaders defecting to the saffron party.

Addressing the concern in Dahod, party general secretary in-charge Jairam Ramesh affirmed that the BJP courting Congress leaders is helping some able people get the required attention.

When Gandhi addressed the people, the party suspended turnout and former state party president Arjun Modhwadia's brother and ex-vice presi-

dent of Gujarat Youth Congress Ramdev Modhwadia for six years. As per sources, Ramdev will soon follow his brother's footsteps and join the BJP.

Speaking to reporters in Dahod, Ramesh underscored that the departure of one individual from the party creates opportunities for countless others.

"Within our organisation, there are numerous experienced youth, women, and leaders who, for various reasons,

have not yet been given an opportunity." "It's painful to witness individuals leaving the party, especially those who have dedicated 30 to 40 years of their lives and received significant support from the party.

Despite receiving more than their fair share, it's regrettable that such individuals choose to depart. However, when one person exits the Congress, it paves the way for thousands of other individuals to step up," he said.



Assets of sugar mill owned by Sharad Pawar kin attacked

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

AHEAD of Lok Sabha election, the ED on Friday attached assets valued at ₹50.20 crore of Kannad cooperative sugar mill owned by NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar, grand nephew of former union minister Sharad Pawar.

Kannad cooperative sugar mill, located in Sambhaji Nagar, is owned by Baramati Agro Ltd and the NCP MLA (SP) owns the latter. ED in its note stated they attached the 161 acre premises of Kannad sugar mill under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering (PMLA), alleging that the sugar mill was illegally sold by Maharashtra State Co-operative Bank (MSCB) in 2002 by devaluing its assets and premises cost.

Reacting to the ED actions, Pawar revealed that he read ED's social media post and remarked, "ED's action against my company, so should I join the BJP now?" He pointed out that due to the pressure of central agencies, people who were ready to surrender and had no spine had already left the party and joined the BJP.

"But BJP should remember, I will never succumb and surrender because I have self-respect. I will continue to fight and approach the court against the illegal actions of ED against my firm. The people who are working in our sugar mill should not be worried at all. The question is why action was only taken against me? This is gross misuse of power by the BJP," alleged Rohit.

The attached assets are 161.30 acres of land, plant and machinery and building of the sugar unit in Kannad, Aurangabad. ED initiated investigations on the basis of an FIR registered by Economic Offence Wing, under sections of IPC.

Modi 1st PM to visit Kaziranga since '74, to launch ₹18K cr projects today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Guwahati

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday arrived in Assam on a two-day visit during which he will inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for projects worth nearly ₹18,000 crore. The PM, who landed at Salnibari near Tezpur airport in a special flight, was received by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

Modi will become the first Prime Minister to visit Kaziranga and explore it after it was upgraded to a national park in 1974. He took a chopper to go to Panbari in Golaghat district. From there, he went to the one-horned rhino fame Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve by road. People lined up on both sides of the road and the PM waved at them.

"As Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji reaches Kaziranga National Park, #ModiParivarAssam comes out in large numbers to welcome their very own family member to the World Heritage Site," Sarma wrote on X, formerly Twitter, sharing a video. The Chief Minister's Office said the PM would spend the



night at the World Heritage Site and explore its beauty on Saturday morning. He is expected to spend around two hours inside the park in the morning before leaving for Jorhat, which adjoins Golaghat district.

Talking about the PM's programme on Saturday, Sarma said, "The ₹ 3,992 crore Barauni-Guwahati pipeline is a historic feat in enhancing India's energy security as it connects Northeast to the National Gas Grid. Along with this, PM will

commission two other projects to augment India's pumping and refining capacity."

Modi will also inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for several petroleum projects. Later in the day, he will leave Jorhat for Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar where, among others, he will dedicate the world's longest two-lane Sela tunnel to the nation. The Border Roads Organisation built it at an altitude of above 13,000 feet. After attending the programme in Itanagar, he will return to Jorhat and unveil the 125-ft tall statue of Ahom General Lachit Borphukan.

The PM's visit followed protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) by the members of All Assam Students' Union. The protests returned to the state following Union home minister Amit Shah's recent statement that the contentious Act would be implemented before the Lok Sabha elections.

Assam visit after protest against CAA

The PM's visit followed protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) by the members of All Assam Students' Union. The protests returned to the state following home minister Amit Shah's statement that the Act would be implemented before the Lok Sabha elections.

Army officer abducted at gunpoint in Manipur, rescued after joint ops

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

A Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) of the Army was abducted by unidentified armed men in strife-torn Manipur on Friday. Officials said the middle-aged Meitei JCO, Kongsam Kheda Singh, was at home on leave when the armed men, who came in a car, carried out the abduction.

He was later rescued by the security forces from Waikhong area in Kakching district. The police, Army, Border Security Force and Assam Rifles had launched a massive search to trace the JCO. The personnel frisked vehicles on National Highway 102.

The incident occurred at Charangpat Mamang Leikai in the Meitei-majority Thoubal district of the Imphal Valley. The motive behind the abduction was not known. The family did not receive any phone calls from the abductors, sources said. This is the fourth incident since the ethnic violence in the state broke out on May 3 last year wherein soldiers while

on duty or leave or their relatives have been targeted by armed miscreants.

In September last year, a former Assam Regiment soldier, Serto Thangthang Kom, was kidnapped and killed by an unidentified armed group.

He was posted in the state's Leimakhong with the Defence Service Corps. Two months later, an unidentified armed group had kidnapped four persons while they were travelling

in an SUV from the hill district of Churachandpur to Leimakhong and killed them. The four were family members of an Indian Army soldier serving in Jammu and Kashmir. A fifth passenger, the father of the soldier, managed to escape with injuries. Next, an Additional Superintendent of Police was attacked in his house in Imphal on February 27 this year. The attackers were identified as members of Meitei radical group Arambai Tenggol.

After the incident, police commandos, posted in the Imphal Valley, had staged an "arms down" protest.

Jail chief held after phones seized from Amritpal cell

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Guwahati

THE superintendent of Assam's highly-secured Dibrugarh Central Jail was arrested by the police on Friday in connection with the recent seizure of electronic gadgets from the cell of National Security Act (NSA) detainee and Waris Punjab De chief Amritpal Singh.

The police said Nipen Das, the jail superintendent, was arrested based on "digital evidence". During a search on February 17, the jail staff had recovered a smartphone with SIM, keypad phone, TV remote with keyboard, spy cam pen, pen drives, bluetooth headphones & speakers and smart watch from the NSA cell housing Singh and nine of his

associates.

"During investigation, we learnt that there was some collusion between the jail superintendent along with staff and the NSA detainees. It was a difficult situation because electronic and sensitive materials were provided. The items increased their reach and access. We arrested him (Das) based on the digital evidence," Dibrugarh Superintendent of Police VV Rakesh Reddy said.

He said the police found the involvement of Das prima facie. He said the case would be investigated further as it is sensitive involving NSA detainees, not normal jail inmates. "Things provided to him should have been as per the jail manual," the SP said.

Joshimath sinking victims to get a place to stay



GS1 found 20% of buildings were 'unusable', 42% needed further check | PTI FILE

Portals of Kedarnath shrine to open on May 10

The portals of the world-famous eleventh Jyotirlinga Shri Kedarnath Dham will open on Friday, May 10 at 7 am, and on May, the puja of Bhairavnath ji will be performed at the Shri Omkareshwar Temple in Ukhimath. The panch-mukhi idol of Lord Kedarnath will depart from the Panch Kedar Gaddi Sthal at the Shri Omkareshwar Temple in Ukhimath on May 6 and will reach Kedarnath Dham on May 9.

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

IN a significant development, the state government has adopted a flexible approach towards the rehabilitation and relocation of individuals impacted by the 2023 Joshimath land submergence disaster.

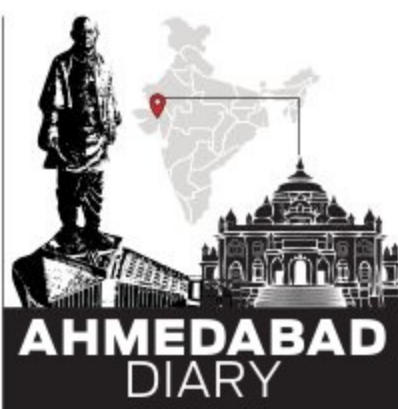
During a high-level delegation meeting between the members of Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti and the state Chief Secretary, several key points were mutually agreed upon pertaining to the rehabilitation of individuals impacted by the 2023 Joshimath land submergence disaster.

According to a member, "a preliminary agreement was reached on the proposal of the committee that the affected persons be shifted near Joshimath for their rehabilitation, a request which has been ap-

proved by the government."

On Thursday, a special delegation of the Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti met with Chief Secretary Radha Raturi and Disaster Management Secretary Dr. Ranjeet Sinha in Dehradun and had a detailed discussion on the main points of rehabilitation.

A spokesperson for the committee said, "During this discussion, the government showed some flexibility regarding its previous plan for the rehabilitation of the Joshimath land disaster victims." Following a meeting convened by Badrinath MLA Rajendra Bhandari with CS and Disaster Management Secretary, Atul Sati, they said, "During the discussion, CS Radha Raturi endorsed certain proposals we put forth concerning allocation of land for the relocation."



AHMEDABAD DIARY

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA
Our correspondent in Gujarat
dilipsingh@
newindianexpress.com

Congress suspends Modhwadia's brother

The Gujarat Congress suspended Ram Dev Modhwadia for six years on Friday. He is the brother of Arjun Modhwadia, former Gujarat Congress President and Porbandar MLA, who has since left the party. Sources reveal that Ram Dev's intention to later join the BJP was thwarted by his suspension. Consequently, a controversy has arisen in Porbandar regarding the Congress office. An anonymous Congress leader mentioned that "Some leaders demanded the office bearer to vacate and hand over keys, following Ram Dev's suspension." The dispute is expected to escalate. Three-time MLA Arjun Modhwadia joined BJP on Tuesday, stating that it was with the sole aim of strengthening the resolve of PM.



PM intervenes, saves tickets of three MPs

The BJP has unveiled its preliminary list of 15 candidates for the 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat. Sources indicate that the tickets of three Gujarat MPs initially dropped from this list were saved by PM Modi. Mansukh Vasava, a six-term MP from South Gujarat Bharuch, MP Bharat Dabhi from Patan, and Poonam Madam from Jamnagar were among those whose tickets were at risk initially, but the Prime Minister intervened to spare them. Additionally, it is reported that during a late-night meeting in Delhi, new strong candidates from the Gujarat BJP were proposed as replacements for these three MPs. However, sources suggest that PM Modi provided a lifeline to the current MPs.

New faces expected in 11 Gujarat Lok Sabha seats

After the release of candidates for 15 out of Gujarat's 26 Lok Sabha seats, announcements for the remaining 11 seats are imminent, with discussions already held at the Delhi Parliamentary Board meeting. Sources suggest that new BJP candidates may secure tickets for four to five of these seats, potentially replacing current women MPs. Names like Shardaben Patel of Mehsana, Bhariben Shyal of Bhavnagar, Ranjanben Bhatt of Vadodara, Gitaben Rathwa of Chhotaudepur, and Darshanaben Zardosh of Surat are under consideration for replacement. Additionally, there has been speculation that new female candidates may be given more priority for the remaining seats in the party.

Urging voters to reject 'resentment, revenge and retribution' President Joe Biden used his State of the Union address on Thursday to make his case for a second term to a dispirited electorate and to warn that GOP front-runner Donald Trump would be a dangerous alternative. His speech from the House rostrum, delivered just eight months before Biden stands for reelection, was something of an on-the-job interview for the nation's oldest president as he tries to quell voter concerns about his age and job performance while sharpening the contrast with his all-but-certain November rival.

ternal pushback. Whatley will carry the top title, replacing long-time chair Ronna McDaniel after she fell out of favour with key figures in the former president's 'Make America Great Again' movement. But he will be surrounded by people closer to Trump. Lara Trump is expected to focus largely on fundraising and media appearances. The functional head of the RNC will be Chris LaCivita, who will assume the committee's chief of staff role while maintaining his job as one of the Trump campaign's top two advisers.

With Trump's blessing, LaCivita is promising to enact sweeping changes and staffing moves at every level of the RNC to ensure it runs seamlessly as an extension of the Trump campaign.

भारत सरकार
अंतरिक्ष विभाग
इसरो नोडल कॉन्ट्रोलर
निर्माण एवं अवरक्षण समूह
महेंद्रगिरि पी ओ- 627 133
दूरभाष : 04637-28-1672/1582/3582
फैक्स : 04637-281681

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
ISRO PROPULSION COMPLEX
CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP
MAHENDRAGRIRI PO - 627 133
Telephone: 04637 - 28-1672 / 1582 / 3582
Fax: 04637 - 281681

ई-निविदा सूचना / E-TENDER NOTICE

भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से, निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु ई-निविदा द्वारा मद-दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।
On Behalf of the President of India, item-rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for the following works:

दिनांक/Dated : 05-03-2024

क्र. सं.	सिविल कार्यों के नाम	प्राक्कलित लागत Estimated Cost (रुलाकों में) (in Lakhs)	कार्य पूरा होने की अवधि Period of completion	ईएमडी EMD(₹)
Sl. No.	Name of The Civil Works			
1	एनआईटी सं:आईपीआरसी/ सीएमजी/ टीडी/ ई- 127/ एमआई/ सीपीएच- 64/2023-24 आईपीआरसी, महेंद्रगिरि के विभिन्न सुविधाओं में छिड़की/ स्थिर ग्लास विभाजनों पर कापड़े और बांस के पर्दे लगाना और प्रदान करना। Providing and laying Cloth and Bamboo Curtains to windows/ fixed glass partitions at various facilities in IPRC, Mahendragiri.	10.00	06 (छह महीने / Six Months)	20,000
2	एनआईटी सं:आईपीआरसी/ सीएमजी/ टीडी/ ई- 166/ एमए/ सीपीएच- 85/2023-24 आईपीआरसी, महेंद्रगिरि में जल आपूर्ति प्रणाली के लिए मोटर्स के साथ-साथ खराब पंपों की ठोड़ई और कुओं में पंप की स्थापना सहित पंप हाउसों का प्रचालन और रखरखाव। Operation and maintenance of pump houses & wells including lifting break down pumps with motors and erection of pump in wells for water supply system at IPRC, Mahendragiri.	29.18	12 (बारह महीने / Twelve Months)	58,400
3	एनआईटी सं:आईपीआरसी/ सीएमजी/ टीडी/ ई- 167/ एमए/ सीपीएच- 86/2023-24 आईपीआरसी हार्बर्सिंग कॉलोनी, वल्लिपूर में सिविल प्रणालियों के प्रचालन और रखरखाव के लिए सेवा सौविदा। Service contract for operation and maintenance of civil systems at IPRC Housing colony, Valliyoor.	44.37	12 (बारह महीने / Twelve Months)	88,800

ऑनलाइन निविदा करने की तिथि : Dates for Online Request: From 09-03-2024 [10:00 बजे/hours] से To: 22-03-2024 [18:00 बजे/hours] तक।
प्रस्तुतीकरण की तिथि व नियत समय : Due Date & Time of Submission: 25-03-2024 [18:00 बजे/hours] तक।
अधिक जानकारी के लिए देखें : For further details visit: www.isro.gov.in/tenders (यॉर) www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO.
नोट : उपर्युक्त कार्य (कार्य) के लिए पध्दति में सभी पत्राचार (शुद्धिपत्र) केवल उपर्युक्त वेबसाइट पर ही प्रकाशित किए जाएंगे।
Note : All future correspondence (Corrigenda) for the above work(s) shall be published only on the websites mentioned above.

समूह निदेशक, सीएमजी, आईपीआरसी / GROUP DIRECTOR, CMG, IPRC

polls delivered a fractured mandate: PPP supported PML-N's candidate for prime minister's post and also got to form the government in the Punjab provincial assembly while Zardari got the support of PML-N and his party got to rule the Sindh province.

I, MR. NAVRATTAN LAL BORAD, aged about 78 years, son of Madanchand, residing at No. A-1202, Salarpuria Serenity, HSR Layout, 7th Sector, 53 Main Road, Bangalore - 560 102, hereby bring to the notice of general public that I am the absolute owner of Immovable Property morefully described in the Schedule written hereunder and I have purchased the Schedule Property under a deed of sale dated 14.03.2007 from Mr. Eric Joseph D'Souza.

The previous title deed pertaining to Schedule Property that is deed of sale dated 29.01.2000 executed by my predecessors-in-title Ignemasma & 8 others in favour of Eric Joseph D'Souza, registered as document No. 7957/1999-2000 of Book-I in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Bangalore South Taluk could not be traced or found and the same is lost forever. That under the circumstances I have obtained certified copy of the aforesaid deed of sale dated 29.01.2000 and the said Certified Copy of the above sale deed is to be treated as the conclusive proof of my marketable title. The General Public are required to take note of the above. Anyone claiming any interest over the aforesaid property based on the aforesaid sale deed dated 29.01.2000 shall inform in writing within 10 days from the date of this notice to the undersigned and thereafter no claims shall be entitled.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of residential site No. 466, Khata No. 2733, formed out of residentially converted property bearing Sy. No. 21/5, House Site No. 466 of Kammanahalli Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, measuring East to West 50 feet, North to South 48 feet, totally measuring 2400 Square Feet **bounded on the East by Site No. 456, West by Road, North by Site No. 467 and South by: Site No. 465.**

SD/-
Baptist D'Souza-Advocate
No.15/2, 3rd cross,
Victoriaiya Layout, Bangalore-47
Ph : 9845004974

Notice is hereby given that My client, M/S. E. Bulditch represented by its Managing Partner, Mohammed Elia, (LPI), Office at No. 353, 1st Floor, S.D. SO, 50, 1st Cross, Bellary Road, Bengaluru-560001 has negotiated to purchase the below mentioned Schedule property from its Owner Smt. Mirle Yashawini W/O. Sri. M. Hrudan, S.O. 50, 1st Cross, Bellary Road, Vinayaknagar, Bengaluru-560002.

Any person's having any claim in respect of the Schedule property by way of sale, agreement, exchange, mortgage, charge, lien, gift, grant or otherwise shall be deemed to have waived, released or otherwise of whatsoever nature however are hereby requested to inform the same in writing, to the undersigned together, with the documents in support thereof, within the period of 7 days from date of publication of the notice, failing which such claim/s or objection/s if any shall be considered as waived and/or discharged forever.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Vacant Site No. 06/A, Assessment No. 71/21 present BHPM katha No. 71/21/6(A) situated at Chokkanah Village Velankona Hobli, Bangalore District.

Ward No. 05, Measuring East to West: On Northern side 48 feet, on southern side 47 feet and North to South on Eastern side 32 feet, on Western side 31 feet.

East to West: On Northern side 39 feet and East by Side No. 5 and West by Side No. 6 North by Side No. 6A, South by Side No. 6

Sd/-SHAIK USHS PASHA - Advocate

No. 14 Edward Road, Queens Road,
Vasanthnagar, Bangalore - 560002
Mobile No. 9845287289

Public are hereby informed that my client proposes to purchase the below mentioned Property from its owner **Smt. JAYAMMA**, Daughter of Sri Pappanna, Manchanabele Village, Chikballapur Taluk & District and her attorney holders Sri Vijay Swas Yadav, Sri Ch. Narasimha Rao, No.6, 80 First Road, K. Channarayana, Hosiwara, Bangalore. Mr.N.M.Naidu, Son of Mr. Krishnappa, No.141, Kalkere, Behind Government School, Horamavu, Bangalore and Decree Holders Sri Vasanth Kumar K. N. Son of late Narasimhaiah, Sri Ramaniyanappa K. P. Son of late Pilla Arinjappa, Kalkere Village, Horamavu Post, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore and Sri.Ramachandara, Son of Sri.Halagegowda, No.82, Balughatta Village, Channarayana Taluk, Hassan District, who have represented that they acquired the Property No.512 by virtue of a Compromise Decree in O.S.No.1537/2018 and through registered Power of Attorney dated 15/12/2022. Persons objecting for the proposed sale or having any right in the said property may lodge his/their objections and/or claims with the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence within **10 days** from the date of this publication and objections and/or claims received thereafter will not be binding on my Clients and my Clients will proceed to purchase the Schedule Property as if there are no claims/objections.

Site bearing No. 8 measuring
25 x 42.50 = 1062.50 Sq. Feet bearing
Khatua No. 512/28 carved out of property no.
512/22 (Old No. 512) in Trinity Encave, 3rd
Cross, Banjara Layout, Kalkere Village,
K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk,
Bangalore, and bounded by :
East : Road
West : Remaining Portion of land
belonging to Jayamma
North : Land belonging to Pilla Anjinappa
South : Site No.9

Site bearing No. 9 measuring
25 x 42.50 = 1062.50 Sq. Feet bearing
Khatua No. 512/29 carved out of property no.
512/22 (Old No. 512) in Trinity Encave, 3rd
Cross, Banjara Layout, Kalkere Village,
K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk,
Bangalore, and bounded by :
East : Road
West : Remaining Portion of land
belonging to Jayamma
North : Site No. 8
South : Site No.10
Date: 07.03.2024, Place: Bangalore

Mr. K. P. RUPESH KUMAR,
Advocates & Consultants
M/s. LAW CORP
No. G3, Ground Floor, Mohan Towers,
No. 98/2-27, Residency Road,
Bangalore. (M) 9886761765.

**IN THE COURT OF THE 39th
ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL AND
SESSIONS JUDGE, AT BANGALORE
(CCH-40) P and S C No.835 /2022**
BETWEEN : 1. Smt. Anitha Satish
Kadaba, Aged about 54 years,
D/o Late Sri. B S Narayana Prasad,
W/o Satish Kadaba, Residing at, No 23/1,
Vishnuhead Apartment, Plot No. 002,
7th Main Road, Malleshwaram,
Bangaluru - 560003

2. Smt. Anitha Prasad, Aged about
52 years, D/o Late Sri. B S Narayana
Prasad, W/o. Satish S, Residing at,
No. 914, SRIRANGA 3rd Main, D Block
Rajajinagar 2nd stage North
Bangaluru - 560010 : **PETITIONERS**
AND : Nil : **RESPONDENTS**
PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the Petitioners have filed the

above petition under section 372 of Indian Succession Act, seeking grant of Succession Certificate declaring the Petitioners mentioned herein as the legal heirs of the deceased Smt. B. N. Yashoda Prasad and Sri. B. S. Narayana Prasad who died on 10.11.2017 and 25.11.2017 respectively also grant such other further relief as this Hon'ble Court deems fit

It is hereby informed that anybody

having any claims or interest in this matter is hereby informed to appear before this Hon'ble Court (CCH-40) on **27.03.2024** at 11.00 A.M. in person or by pleader duly instructed. Failing which matter will be heard and determined without any claim or objection.

SCHEDULE-I

(List of securities and their quantity in the name of the deceased Late. Shri. B S Narayana Prasad)

ITEM No. 1

For Demat Account No.
IN306114-90409611
Total value of Holding Rs.11,280,196/-

ITEM No. 2

For Demat Account No. IN306114-90410605 (Jointly held by Late Sri. B.S.Narayana Prasad and Late

Smt. B.N.Yashoda Prasad)

ITEM No. 3
For Demat Account No. IN306114-

90410592 (Held by Late. Smt. B.N. Yashoda Deodad) Total value of Holding

ITEM No. 4

For Demat Account No.
IN306114 00410584 (Jointly held by

Late Sri. B.S.Narayana Prasad and
Late Smt. B.N.Yashoda Prasad)

ITEM No. 5

DEMAT ACCOUNT NO.:
12047200-04780235 With CSDL in the
name of Late Smt. B.N.Yashoda Prasad
containing nil balance.

ITEM No. 6
REMAT ACCOUNT NO: 12047280

04753606 With CSDL in the name of Late Sri. B.S.Narayana containing nil balance.

SCHEDULE II

Bank safe deposit locker No.192 and key No.187 standing in the joint name of B.S.Narayana and B.N.Yashoda without nomination in State Bank of India maintained with Basaveswara Nagar Branch, No.325, Rudrappa Complex, 8th Main, Basaveswara Nagar, Bangalore.

Given under my hand and seal of this

Court on this the 29th day of February
2024.

By Order of the Court
Sd/- Assistant Registrar

Lawyers Guild, Advocates
116/1, 1st Floor, Lakshmi Nivas,
11th Cross, West Park Road,
Malleshwaram, Bangalore - 560 003
Phone : +91 9448003984

QuoteExpress
**PROBLEMS ARE
NOT STOP SIGNS,
THEY ARE
GUIDELINES**

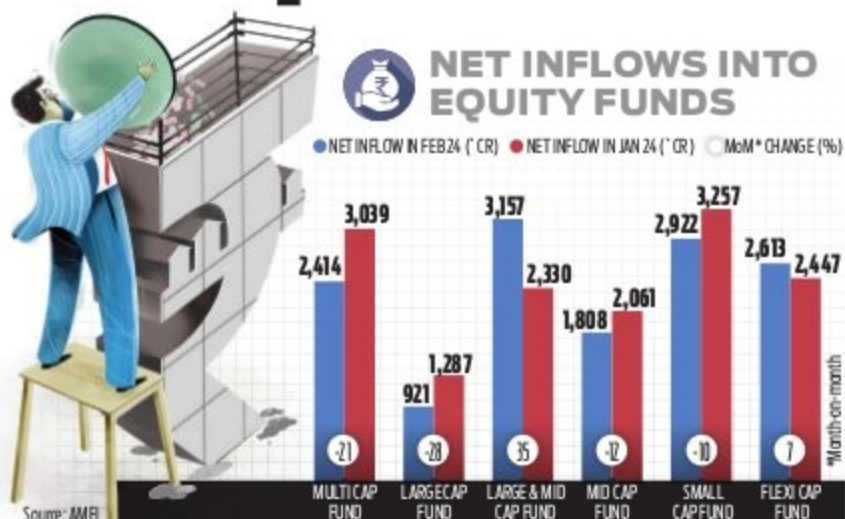
Inflows into equity-based funds surged to 23-month high of ₹26,866 crore in February

Small, mid-cap fund inflows fall

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

ON the back of new fund offers (NFOs), monthly inflows into equity-based funds surged to a 23-month high of ₹26,866 crore in February 2024. However, there was a sequential decline in mid-cap and small-cap fund inflows amid increased liquidation by asset management companies (AMC) over hefty valuation concerns.

Data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) on Friday showed inflows into small-cap mutual fund schemes came down by 10% to ₹2,922 crore in February against ₹3,257 crore in January while redemption in these schemes grew 5% to ₹3,975 crore last month against ₹3,777 crore logged in January. Inflows into the mid-cap schemes fell 12% to ₹1,808 crore in February as against ₹2,061 crore in January. Systematic investment plan (SIP) inflows reached an all-time high in February 2024, surpassing the ₹19,000 crore mark for the first time. The SIP assets under manage-



ment (AUM) for February 2024 stood at ₹10.52 lakh crore.

Venkat Chalasani, CEO of AMFI, said the recent measures taken around mid-cap and small-cap funds are part of the risk management framework as the ultimate aim of the industry is to protect investors' interests. He added that the intention of the regulator (Sebi) and the industry is not to stop the inflow into small-cap funds but to enhance disclosure and transparency.

Last month, Sebi told mutual

funds (MFs) to frame a policy to protect the interest of investors following a sell-off in small, midcap, and microcap stocks. The AMCs are now required to disclose the results of stress tests for small and mid-cap schemes by March 15 each year. This is expected to improve the risk assessment of investors.

"AMCs shall disclose the results of stress test and liquidity, volatility, valuation and portfolio turnover in respect of mid-cap and small-cap equity schemes, as per the attached

format, along with the guidance in simple language, assumptions and methodology, to enable the investor to understand the risk associated with the aforesaid two category of schemes," stated a recent circular issued by the AMFI.

Viraj Gandhi, CEO, SAMCO Mutual Fund, said that as anticipated earlier, there is a mild sequential moderation in mid-cap and small-cap funds inflows by 12% and 10% respectively. "Caution was required, caution is advised and caution prevailed by moderation of flows in the segment, though marginally, but a step in the right direction," added Gandhi.

Gandhi said February was the NFO festival for the industry. There were 20 NFOs, 8 equity-based, which collected ₹8,692 crore, ₹1,500 crore came in hybrid schemes and the balance 10 offerings gathered ₹1,278 crore totalling ₹11,470 crore. Debt-oriented schemes saw inflows of ₹63,809 crore led by liquid funds at ₹83,642 crore and outflows of ₹17,376 crore from overnight funds.

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Bengaluru

FINTECH firm BharatPe has said it will continue to pursue civil and criminal action against Ashneer Grover at the high court, Economic Offences Wing (EOW) and other relevant authorities. The company has reiterated this as the former BharatPe managing director Grover has written letters to the Reserve Bank of India, EOW and also the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In his letter to the RBI, Grover has urged the central bank to start a probe into the shareholding of BharatPe. According to reports, he said the company has deliberately defrauded the regulator by bringing back Bhavik Koladiya, who co-founded the company along with Shashvat Nakrani. Earlier Grover had accused Koladiya (who quit the company in July 2022) saying that he took data from the company to his new venture.

After quitting BharatPe, Koladiya took charge as the chief executive officer of OTP-



Less, a SaaS start-up. As the Delhi Police denied permission to both Grover and wife Madhuri Jain to travel to the UK, he has reportedly appealed to EOW to stop the wild goose chase against him. Grover has been requesting the EOW to withdraw the lookout circular against them.

Earlier in November last year, New York-bound Grover and wife were stopped at the Delhi airport over a lookout notice issued by the EOW as part of the ongoing fraud probe.

Reacting to Grover's letter to the RBI, the fintech company said, "BharatPe has a stellar

Board with independent directors under the guidance of Rajnish Kumar and we give highest importance to governance, transparency and building a sustainable business."

"Recent media stories indicate that a letter with unsubstantiated allegations has been written to the RBI by Ashneer Grover. These allegations are frivolous and nothing but another desperate attempt to malign the company," the firm added.

The company also said that it will continue to pursue civil and criminal action against Grover. Last year, EOW had registered an FIR against Grover; his wife and family members under eight sections for allegedly defrauding fintech firm BharatPe of ₹81.28 crore. Also, a preliminary report of the investigation alleged that Grover and his wife diverted Rs 7.6 crore from BharatPe through eight bogus HR consultants and that invoices from five companies that were providing recruitment services were backdated.

₹96K cr spectrum auction to start on May 20

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE spectrum auction for mobile services will start on May 20, according to a notice inviting applications released by the Department of Telecom on Friday.

The government will auction eight spectrum bands at a base price of ₹96,317.65 crore. Spectrum, held by certain companies undergoing insolvency processes, will be put on the auction. The right-to-use of frequencies held by the telecom service providers expiring this year will also be put on the block.

All the available spectrum in 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz, and 26 GHz bands will be part of the auction.

"The Department of Telecom (DoT) has initiated the spectrum auction to augment the existing telecom services and maintain continuity of services. The DoT issued notice inviting applications (NIA) today (Friday)," an official statement said. "The cumulative reserve price of the 10523.15 MHz spectrum put to auction is ₹96,317.65 crore," the statement added.

The department has fixed April 22 as the last date for submission of application and it will release the final list of bidders on May 9. The spectrum will be assigned for a period of twenty (20) years and successful bidders will be allowed to make payments in 20 equal annual instalments, duly protecting the NPV at the interest rate of 8.65%.

ED attaches properties worth ₹367 cr of Bhushan Steel in money laundering case

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

ENFORCEMENT Directorate on Friday attached movable and immovable properties worth ₹367 crore of Bhushan Steel Limited under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The immovable properties were situated in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Odisha. The attached properties were held in the name of proxies or shell entities through dummy directors. ED initiated investigations on the basis of Prosecution Complaint filed by Serious Fraud Investigation

'Former MD routed funds'

As per ED probe, erstwhile MD of Bhushan Steel Limited (BSL) Neeraj Singal and associates formed several shell companies. They rotated funds from one company to another through a network of multiple entities

Office (SFIO) against Bhushan Steel Limited.

As per ED investigations, erstwhile managing director of Bhushan Steel Limited (BSL) Neeraj Singal and associates formed several shell companies. They rotated funds from one company to another through a

network of multiple entities.

The funds were circulated to infuse capital, buy property and for other personal purposes not intended by the banks. Investigations further revealed that promoters, directors and the officials of BSL prepared forged documents and made fraudulent representations before the banks to discount Letter of Credits (LCs) and diverted the funds back into their own companies with malafide intentions. Funds were misappropriated against the fabricated LCs created in favour of JSW Steel limited and Hindustan Zinc Limited.

ASIANOMICS

JAPAN

JAN HOUSEHOLD SPENDING SEES BIG FALL

Japan's consumer spending declined the most in 35 months in January, the country's internal affairs ministry data showed on Friday. According to a government official, one-off factor is responsible for the fall in household spending, playing down the impact on broader consumption trends. The country's household spending in January fell by 6.3% from a year ago period and was down for the 11th straight month, data showed. That was worse than the median market forecast for a decline of 4.3% and marked the biggest drop since February 2021. Spending fell 2.1% on a seasonally adjusted, month-on-month basis as against an estimated 0.4% increase. The decline in spending was on account of fall in new car purchases amid factory suspensions, lower energy bills due to warm weather and the backdrop of higher spending in the same month last year from post-pandemic travel subsidies, the interior affairs ministry official said.

CHINA

EXPORTS, IMPORTS BEAT ESTIMATES FOR FIRST 2 MONTHS

The exports and imports of China beat estimates for the first two months of the year. This could be an indication that demand is improving as the country attempts to boost economic recovery. The country's exports for January-February jumped 7.1% from a year earlier, customs data released Thursday showed, which is higher than the 2.3% increase in December. The country's imports jumped 3.5% from the same period the previous year, which is a jump from a 0.2% growth in December. It has registered a trade surplus of \$125.16 billion for the said period. The data for the first two months of the year are combined to avoid disruptions from the weeklong Lunar New Year holidays, when many businesses and factories were closed. China usually releases trade data monthly. The country has been struggling to bounce back after the pandemic, as it grapples with weaker demand globally as well as a domestic property crisis that remains a drag on the economy.

PAKISTAN

IMF BACKS NEW PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC PROGRAMME

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Friday it will support formulating a new economic programme for Pakistan if the country's new government seeks one. The global fund has asked the country for a fair resolution of all electoral disputes. The cash-strapped country has grappled with an uncertain February 8 election that delayed the formation of a coalition government until new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was sworn in on Monday. The new Prime Minister has asked his government to open talks with the IMF for a new programme after clearing the stand-by arrangement. The country secured a \$3 billion IMF stand-by arrangement last summer. However, it is still struggling with record inflation, currency devaluation and shrinking foreign reserves. Former prime minister Imran Khan had earlier asked the IMF to perform an audit of the disputed February election before any more bailout talks with Islamabad.

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

WITH the delay in the GST Council meeting, several industries awaiting clarifications from the government won't get immediate relief as the model code of conduct will be coming into force with the poll announcement.

The Council in its 51st meeting had announced to review the 28% levy on online gaming and casinos after six months of its implementation date which

Govt hikes M&A threshold under combination rule

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE government has increased the threshold of M&As for application of competition law under business combination provisions.

The government on Friday issued a notification saying it has raised threshold limits for assets from ₹350 crore to ₹450 crore and turnover from ₹1,000 crore to ₹1,250 crore concerning exemption for business combinations under Section 5 of the Competition Act. The notification clarified that in cases of acquisition

or merger involving a part of a business, the calculation of relevant assets and turnover under Section 5 of the Act depends on the value of that specific portion. The government has also enhanced the threshold value based on wholesale price index and exchange rate of rupee, value of assets, and turnover by 150%.

was October 1, 2023.

The Council is supposed to meet every quarter but this time it had to skip because of interim budget and the upcoming general elections. "The GST Council meet will likely take place after the new government is formed. No major decision can be taken because of the model code of conduct," a top official told this newspaper. The 52nd GST Council meeting took place on October 07, 2023. The Directorate General of GST in-

telligence (DGGI) has tightened its noose around fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies for alleged tax evasion.

According to industry sources, the FMCG industry needs clarification from the Council, as there is a lot of ambiguity around the tax rate. Similarly, the real estate industry is also awaiting clarification regarding 18% GST levied on special purpose vehicle (SPV) model for projects. Also, it has to clarify its stand on the continuity

of anti-profiteering provisions, rate rationalisation, GST on corporate guarantees,

"GST Council takes decisions on all crucial aspects of GST. It is but natural that with the model code of conduct for general elections expected to be announced anytime soon, policy decisions on GST matters are deferred till such time the Code of Conduct is in effect," said Chetan Daga, a chartered accountant and founder of AdvantEdge Consulting.

Olive eyes expansion with hybrid key

HRITHIK KIRAN BAGADE @ Bengaluru

BENGALURU-based hospitality management company Olive by Embassy has embarked upon a novel hybrid strategy to cater to the discerning travelling professionals of today, as it seeks expansion in the underserved corners of the Indian hotel space.

Olive's pioneering approach to cater to an increasing demand for multifunctional spaces, seamlessly combining a range of concepts, encompassing hotels, co-living, co-working spaces, members' clubs, wellness facilities and dining options, all within a single location, and all this driven by cutting-edge technology.

"As a hybrid product, Olive aims to bridge the gap between short-stay and long-stay accommodations, while preserving the flexibility and simplicity of booking, akin to reserving a hotel room — no deposit, no questions asked. Our strong emphasis on technological integration empowers us to provide a seamless, trouble-free experience for

guests," Olive by Embassy Co-Founder and CEO Kahraman Yigit told *TNE*.

Under its current umbrella, Olive offers a range of accommodation options: Olive Life is aimed at students and young professionals in Tier 1, 2, and 3 cities, offering stays for three months or more; Olive Zip is for budget-conscious travellers, providing economical daily stays; while Olive

Hotels cater to more affluent travellers, offering a broad selection of rooms and amenities. Besides, there is Select Olive, operating in the luxury segment at leisure destinations. In all, the company operates 52 properties (some under construction or refurbishment), with 2,579 keys, translating into 5,158 beds, at present. Within the next 12 months, it is eyeing a pipeline of 5,926 keys in the said three cities, while exploring new markets.

"India has the ability to produce a multi-billion-dollar hospitality business, and we see a huge opportunity, especially in the unorganised market. Hence, the strategy is to grow in that market," Yigit said. According-

ly, Olive will foray into new markets such as Hyderabad and Pune within the year, while as part of its leisure push, it is keen on exploring opportunities in Chikkamagaluru, Sakleshpur, Kabini and Kodagu in Karnataka, and in Rajasthan. The company is also working towards building its own four-star concept, which will be ready by next year.

Olive Mission Control

The challenges of the pandemic period came as a learning experience for Olive. It revealed the changing preferences of travellers, and the role of technology as the game-changer. In the succeeding months, the company introduced a gamut of technologies to make stay and service a breeze.

To begin with, a centralised reception was set up. The Olive Mission Control in Bengaluru is a single station, from which six different receptions can be monitored and handled, across the portfolio. Apart from that, AI cameras monitor house-keeping SOPs, and Bluetooth-enabled automated door knobs provide added security.

FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR

Women-led tech start-ups' funding drops 75% in '23

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Bengaluru

WOMEN-led tech start-ups have managed to secure only \$1.1 billion funding in 2023, a 75% decline compared to \$4.5 billion in 2022. This significant drop in funding was not confined to a specific sector, as it occurred across diverse sectors and geographical locations, according to Tracxn data.

It says the first two months of this year have witnessed \$100 million in funding, close to \$103 million raised in the same period last year. Interestingly, 2021 was the highest funded year as these start-ups raised \$6.5 billion, as they experienced a surge of over 100% funding across various stages. However, post-2021, overall funding across stages declined, except for early-stage start-ups, which saw a 97% increase in 2022, reaching \$1.5 billion compared to the previous year.

With over 2,300 start-ups, the



Delhi-NCR region takes the lead in terms of the number of women-led start-ups formed till now, followed by Bengaluru and Mumbai with 1,795 and 1,497 start-ups, respectively. The report adds that the peak occurrence of women-led Unicorns was observed in 2021, with over 65% of these start-up unicorns led by women emerg-

ing in the years 2021 and 2022.

"In 2023, 13% of the overall funding in the India tech space came from women-led start-ups as they secured \$1.1 billion. There are 2,300 funded women-led start-ups of which 13.4% have progressed to the Series A stage and 3% have gone on to the Series C stage or beyond. Among the founded companies,

2,316 have successfully secured funding. Also, this space has around 6,000 unfunded companies, out of which 590 companies have a revenue of more than \$30,000," the report added.

Another report by PrivateCircle Research points out that 57 out of 112 unicorns have zero women on their board. It found 14 unicorns with more than one woman director on their board. While Zomato has four women directors, start-ups such as Incred, Policybazaar and Paisabazaar have three women directors.

As far as top sectors in women-led start-ups are concerned, according to the Tracxn report, B2C ecommerce takes the lead with 3434 companies, followed by Internet First Brands with 1355 companies and SaaS with 1181. Thriving sectors also include fashion tech, marketplaces, and B2C fashion ecommerce.

EXPRESS READ

Forex reserves jump by \$6.55 billion

NEW DELHI: India's foreign exchange reserves jumped by \$6.55 billion to \$625.626 billion for the week ended March 1, the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday. Overall reserves had risen by \$2.975 billion to \$619.072 billion in the previous reporting week. In October 2021, forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. Reserves took a hit as RBI deployed kitty to defend rupee amid pressures caused by global developments since last year. *ENS*

UPI payments now available in Nepal

CHENNAI: Cross border payments between India and Nepal have become operational for QR-code based person-to-merchant (P2M) UPI transactions between the two countries. This will enable Indian consumers to make UPI payments in Nepal by using UPI-enabled apps. Merchants of Fonepay Network can accept UPI payments from Indian customers. This digital connection reinforces the bonding between the neighbouring nations. *ENS*



Spain's Carlos Sainz has been ruled out of the Saudi Arabia Grand Prix this weekend with appendicitis with 18-year-old British reserve driver Oliver Bearman taking his place, the Ferrari team announced on Friday. "Carlos Sainz has been diagnosed with appendicitis and will require surgery," the Italian team said in a statement.

UWW says only WFI can send entries for Asian meet and Olympic qualifiers

FIROZ MIRZA @Chennai

IN a development that might cast a serious doubt on wrestlers' participation in the international events including Paris Olympics qualifiers, United World Wrestling on Friday reiterated that only Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) can send entries for tournaments being

organised by the world body. In a letter sent to the WFI on Friday and accessed by this daily, the UWW specifically said that no other body can take the role on behalf of the federation. This comes a day after the Delhi High Court authorised ad-hoc committee to conduct selection trials to pick the national teams for the upcoming

Asian Olympic Games Qualifier and Asian Championships. The court issued the directives while hearing a writ petition filed by protesting wrestlers - Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, Vinesh Phogat and Satyawart Kadian. During the hearing, the court also directed the WFI to with-

draw its circular wherein it had announced to conduct selection trials for the events. Even the ad-hoc panel announced the trials on same dates but at different venues - Patiala SAI centre for women wrestlers and Sonapat SAI centre for male freestyle and Greco-Roman grapplers.



The letter says that the WFI like any affiliated units of the UWW is functioning in compliance with the world body's regulations. Notably, the entries for international tournaments are sent through Athena (competition administration system of the UWW) and the world body has given password for the same to the WFI soon after

lifting the suspension on February 13 this year. "The WFI received the letter today from the UWW which clearly says only the federation can send the teams for the international events," Sanjay Kumar Singh, the WFI president, told this daily. "No one should be affected. The sport, wrestlers should not suffer and the

country's pride should be kept intact. As per the letter, only WFI's entries would be accepted by UWW so a solution should be found in this regard as this is an Olympic year," he added. As of now, the ad hoc committee, headed by Bhupinder Bajwa, will conduct the trials on March 10 and 11 as per court order.

SatChi, Lakshya enter semifinals

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

Shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have come a long way over the years. The top men's doubles pair have made a habit of going deep into major tournaments. That has been the case in the ongoing French Open. On Friday, the Indian duo asserted their class to dispatch Thai pair of Supak Jomkoh and Kittinupong Kedren. With this latest hit, they are now two steps away from the Super 750 title.

The duo took just 42 minutes for a 21-19, 21-13 victory. They closed out the match with ease towards the death but the Indian duo had endured a tricky start. The World No 32 Thai shuttlers were sharp from the word go and they were winning the early exchanges. While the Indians were still getting used to the pace of the game, the Thai pair had swiftly built a 11-6 lead going into the first break. That's when Satwik and Chirag showed their resilience. Despite being behind, they didn't panic and gradually closed the gap. As the Indians continued to play with more purpose, they had cut out the deficit and the score read 12-12. After that it was a close tussle with both pairs trading points.

The Indians have been moulded after countless high-pressure ties over the years. That abundant experience was visible as they closed out the game (21-19).

As it was during the business end of the opening game, the second essay was also a tight affair at the start. But the gap between the two pairs was visible as the game wore on. In the end, the Indians coasted to win with ease.

Earlier, PV Sindhu lost a hard-fought battle (24-22, 17-21, 18-21) against China's Chen Yu Fei, the reigning Olympic champ in the women's singles. It will go down as a loss in Sindhu's rich CV, but the fight she put up is a big morale-booster for the two-time Olympic medalist and India. Sindhu, who recently returned to action following an injury break, will be chuffed after her run (two credible wins and day's effort) in Paris.

Later, Lakshya Sen came from behind to outwit former world champion Loh Kean Yew 19-21, 21-15, 21-13. The Indian will now take on Kunlavut Vitidsarn, who's the No 8 seed, in the men's singles semifinals.



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (R) and Chirag Shetty | FILE PIC

Gaurav, Shilpa emerge winners in jr nationals

AGENCIES @ Lucknow

GAURAV Bhaskar Bhosali of Maharashtra and Gujarat's Shilpa Dihora achieved the Asian U-20 qualification mark on way to gold medals in men's and women's 3000m race, respectively, at the National Junior U20 Federation Athletics Championships here on Friday.

While Gaurav clocked 8:40.13s, Shilpa came up with a timing of 9:53.23s on the opening day of the three-day meet.

Besides the two, Madhya Pradesh duo of Vikas Kumar Bind (8:40.55s) and Saud Hasan (8:41.57s) claimed the silver and bronze medals to also achieve the qualifying mark.

In women's 3000m race, Prachi Devkar of Maharashtra and Haryana's Muskan produced timings of 9:53.76s and 9:55.13s to win the silver and bronze medals and make the cut. In men's 3000m, the Asian qualifying mark was 9:16.00s, while 10:00.69s is the cut off in the women's category.

Rohit, Gill take game away from England

Captain and No 3's centuries put hosts in driver's seat on second day; India lead by 255 runs in fifth & final Test

GOMESH S @ Dharamsala

WHEN Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill strode out to bat on Friday morning at the HPCA Stadium, it was not as cold or breezy as Day One. Yet, they knew how would go about in the conditions in the first hour would determine the day. So did England. Which is why they started with James Anderson and Shoaib Bashir. Twenty balls in, it was clear how India were going to go about their business.

Rohit had already sent a message, smashing consecutive boundaries off Bashir. But the real test awaited Gill. Anderson was trying to make the most of the morning weather. Gill, having already faced an over from Anderson, had just negated an inswinger. He knew what the 41-year-old, who was on 698 Test wickets, was trying and decided to take him on.

Gill charged at Anderson, stood tall and lofted him down the ground. Such was the sight of the ball sailing into the stands that even the Dhauadhar Range on the backdrop of the venue couldn't make you take the eyes off Gill. Ben Stokes would nod in acknowledgment with a wry smile.

That was just the beginning. Two balls later, Gill would unleash a fierce cut, sending a short-of-length delivery to the ropes. Then, Rohit guided Anderson with such precision that Stokes took him off after a three-over spell. In came Mark Wood, hoping to hurry Rohit and Gill with his pace. He had two fielders on the leg side behind square, and kept hitting the lengths trying to provoke a mistimed hook or a pull.

But these two thrive against high pace. It is the sideways movement that troubles them. Like Wood occasionally did, an inswinger that took the outside edge of Gill in front of the middle-stump before racing to the ropes.

That apart, both Rohit and Gill were happy to keep their pulls down as well as duck when needed — in fact, the latter received a mean bouncer, but went down in time to evade it — while keeping the scoreboard moving. After a point, Stokes had no choice but to resort to spin from both ends. Once the spinners came on, the duo settled down nicely. Gill stepped out to tonk Bashir every chance he got, with one of them almost going out of the ground. Rohit, at this point, was in no hurry. He was just playing the ball on merit while



Rohit Sharma (l) and Shubman Gill helped build the foundation of India's innings. Half-centuries from Sarfaraz Khan and Devdutt Padikkal took the lead to 255 | [PHI](#)

England 1st innings 218. India 1st innings (o/n 135-1): Jaiswal st Foakes b Bashir 57, Rohit b Stokes 103, Gill b Anderson 110, Padikkal b Bashir 65, Sarfaraz c Root b Bashir 56, Jadeja lbw Hartley 15, Jurel c Duckett b Bashir 15, Ashwin b Hartley 0, Kuldeep batting 27, Bumrah batting 19. Extras (lb4, nb2) 6. Total (8 wks, 120 ovs) 473. FoWs: 1-104, 2-275, 3-279, 4-376, 5-403, 6-427, 7-427, 8-428. Bowling: Anderson 14-1-59-1, Wood 15-1-89-0, Hartley 39-3-126-2, Bashir 44-5-170-4, Stokes 5-1-17-1, Root 3-0-8-0.	
SCOREBOARD	

occasionally bringing out his cuts and pulls. Gill, meanwhile, used his vertical batwing to loft as and when possible. Such was his ferocity against Bashir that he caught up with Rohit as both entered the 90s.

Now, this is where things have to be put in context. Until Rajkot, Rohit was going through a lean patch. He had not scored a century in a while and needed some runs under the belt. Gill, meanwhile, was almost dropped (he may well have been if not for the century in Visakhapatnam). In the third Test, Rohit scored a century and Gill missed one by nine runs. Since then, Rohit had gotten into groove and Gill, on the other hand, has come off age big time. That he took India across the line in Ranchi under testing conditions was not enough; when he got the chance to bat on a flat pitch, he took it with both hands.

All of a sudden, Gill had more than 400 runs in the series and Rohit was closing in. Just before the stroke of lunch, Rohit flicked Tom Hartley in his trademark way to get his 12th Test hundred,

ninth as an opener. The celebrations were a bit muted as the Indian captain raised his bat without removing his helmet like he would do for a half-century. In the next over, Gill got down on one knee to send Bashir into the square leg stands and the moment finally came.

Before Gill could celebrate, Rohit's arms went aloft, celebrating the youngster's milestone. Gill took his cap off, bowed down in front of the dressing room to acknowledge the applause (the crowd, including his dad, watching from the stands, rose to applaud). There was a reason why he was featuring at No. 3 despite the string of low scores. Over the last three weeks, Gill has repaid the faith shown in him.

As Rohit and Gill walked back unbeaten for lunch, everyone in the stands were on their feet. They knew they had witnessed something special. Even the England team knew, Stokes, while appreciating his bowlers for their effort, ensured the Indian duo were walking ahead and crossed the ropes before he and the others did the same.

That session was a testament to India's present and the future, and it, took something special to bring an end to it. Stokes, who had not bowled in a competitive environment for 251 days, bowled a perfect outswinger to castle Rohit before Anderson's inswinger removed Gill. While England could not get back in the game — India batted through the day to finish at 473/8 — it was the stand between Rohit (103) and Gill (110) that ensured the hosts remained on top. And it's worth a lot more than the 171 they put on.

Visitors lose steam to endure tough day

GOMESH S @ Dharamsala

IT was the penultimate over of the day. Shoaib Bashir was sending down his 43rd over of the innings, 20th on the trot. He had four wickets to show and he nearly got his fifth, but Kuldeep Yadav was dropped by Ben Stokes in the slips.

Just as the over was about to finish, the ball went to James Anderson at gully. And the 41-year-old, seemingly frustrated, rolled the 39-over-old ball along the ground towards Bashir. Such was the lack of interest from Anderson that the ball barely crossed extra cover. Bashir had to walk and pick it up. That moment pretty much summed up the kind of day England had on Friday as India added 348 runs while losing seven wickets, finishing on 473/8.

"It was a hard day, a grafting day," England assistant coach Jeetan Patel would say later. "We thought the wicket might offer a bit more this morning and it didn't really — maybe the older ball got soft. But it was a hard day, boys worked really hard and they got their rewards at the end of it. We've got to congratulate the boys for the way they stuck at it. You do the hard stuff time and time again, you eventually get your rewards," he added.

Irrespective of how they perform on the day, the England camp has been sticking to the mantra of focussing on the bright side of things. It is all about being "relentlessly positive", creating a no-negative environment while appreciating the efforts of the players. Friday, despite what Patel said, was one of those days where it seemed like England had run out of ideas while trying to stop the Indian batters.



England cricketers walk back to the pavilion at the end of the second day's play on Friday | [AFP](#)

not even when Kuldeep and Jasprit Bumrah were batting. Mark Wood, the other pacer, bowled 12, but even he did not bowl with the second new ball against Devdutt Padikkal and Sarfaraz Khan after the tea break. Instead, Ben Stokes persisted with spinners from both ends. Not that it was working. Both Padikkal and Sarfaraz had no trouble negotiating Tom Hartley and Bashir as they cruised towards their respective half-centuries. Even when Sarfaraz got out, it was against the run of play and so was the case of Dhruv Jurel, who tried to hit Bashir into the stands. The scorecard reflected England players' toils. Wood (5.9) and Anderson (4.2) went for over four runs per over (RPO), Bashir operated at 3.9 RPO and Hartley at 3.2.

But this doesn't mean England didn't have their moments. When Stokes took the ball, bowling for the first time in 251 days, and delivered a dream delivery to clean up Rohit Sharma, it seemed like he was onto something special. Things looked brighter when Gill got out to Anderson shortly after. However, that joy didn't last long. Stokes bowled one five-over spell and did not come back again in the third session despite the lower-order piling on runs. He was constantly trying different field settings, but it had no effect on the scoreboard. Perhaps, the only positive they can take is how the pitch has played out and the way Indian batters have batted. Even then, against this Indian bowling attack, it would take a repeat of what happened in Hyderabad for England to come back into the game.

Full story: [newindianexpress.com](#)

TITLE RACE HEATS UP

A TOP-OF-THE-TABLE CLASH ASSUMES SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE AS ARSENAL, THE THIRD WHEEL IN THE TITLE RACE, COULD BE FIRST EVEN BEFORE SUNDAY'S ANFIELD TUSSELE. A LOOK AT SOME OF THE WEEKEND'S PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES...

THE TOP THREE

Team	M	W	D	L	PTS
Liverpool	27	19	6	2	63
Man City	27	19	5	3	62
Arsenal	27	19	4	4	61

ARSENAL VS BRENTFORD

11.00 PM ON SATURDAY

After a December stutter, the Gunners have found some swagger, scoring 31 goals while winning each of their last seven fixtures in the league. If they win this, they go top.

ASTON VILLA VS TOTTENHAM

6.30 PM ON SUNDAY

That this is a clash between two Champions League hopefuls (4 vs 5 currently) explains how far they have progressed while how far back the likes of Chelsea remain.

LIVERPOOL VS MANCHESTER CITY

9.00 PM ON SUNDAY

Pep Guardiola has a poor Anfield record (one win in seven in the league). While Liverpool have had horrid luck with injuries, it's all starting to come together in Jurgen Klopp's farewell season.

Live on Star Sports Networks

Europa League: Liverpool, Roma post wins

AGENCIES @ London

LIVERPOOL surged towards the Europa League quarter-finals with a 5-1 win at Sparta Prague on Thursday, as Roma thrashed Brighton 4-0 in the Italian capital.

AC Milan beat 10-man Slavia Prague 4-2, but Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen had to come from 2-0 down to preserve their unbeaten season in a 2-2 draw

RESULTS (LAST 16, FIRST LEG): Sparta Prague (CZE) 1-5 Liverpool (ENG); Roma (ITA) 4-0 Brighton (ENG); Qarabag (AZE) 2-2 Bayer Leverkusen (GER); Marseille (FRA) 4-0 Villarreal (ESP); Benfica (POR) 2-2 Rangers (SCO); Freiburg (GER) 1-0 West Ham (ENG); AC Milan (ITA) 4-2 Slavia Prague (CZE).

against Qarabag.

Liverpool remain on course to send Jurgen Klopp off with a quadruple of trophies as the Reds were not distracted by

Sunday's mammoth Premier League showdown against Manchester City.

Alexis Mac Allister got the visitors off to the perfect start in the Czech capital as he won and converted a penalty after just seven minutes.

Sparta had dumped out Galatasaray in the previous round and created plenty of chances against a makeshift Liverpool defence.

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

Mumbai make a point to go top

AGENCIES @ Jamshedpur

MUMBAI CITY FC displaced Odisha FC at the top of the points table after their match against Jamshedpur FC at the JRD Tata Sports Complex in the Indian Super League (ISL) on Friday. The Islanders now have overtaken the Juggernauts, with both teams having played 18 matches each.

An entertaining first-half action was defined by goalkeepers from both teams assuming the centre stage. TP Rehenesh and Phurba Lachenpa pulled off crucial saves to keep both the oppositions at bay, with the former making a key save off Vikram Partap Singh in the 40th minute of the contest. Lallianzuala Chhangte, who notched the goal, had set up a delivery for Vikram, who tried a unique shot from the outside of his left boot that was saved by an alert Rehenesh on the



Mumbai players celebrate Lallianzuala Chhangte's (L) goal on Friday | [ISL](#)

line. Similarly, Mohammed Sanan had a chance to bag the opener in the seventh minute. Positioned in a promising spot on the left side of the box, Imran Khan's delivery was shot at by Sanan, but Lachenpa saved it to keep scores level.

It took Javi Siverio to break the deadlock in the 60th minute,

and it came off a slick offensive move with Sanan at the centre of it. The youngster passed the ball to an onrushing Muhammed Sivalio, who squared the ball to Siverio for him to tap in and get the team ahead. Mumbai countered similarly with Chhangte finding the equaliser 14 minutes later.

EXPRESS READ

Oly Qualifiers: Boxer Nishant enters last 16

BUSTO ARSIZIO: World Championships bronze medallist Nishant Dev beat Georgia's Madiev Eskerkhan to enter the men's 71kg category pre-quarterfinals of the first World Olympic Boxing Qualifiers here. The Indian won by a unanimous 5-0 margin on Thursday night. Nishant will play his Round of 16 bout on Sunday. Meanwhile, Sanjeet (92kg) lost 0-5 to Aibek Oralbay of Kazakhstan to bow out.

Deepthi steals show as UP Warriorz win thriller

NEW DELHI: Deepthi Sharma's all-round heroics (59 runs & four wickets including a hat-trick) steered UP Warriorz to a thrilling one-run win over Delhi Capitals in the Women's Premier League. Deepthi Sharma scored a fine fifty but DC bowlers managed to restrict UP Warriorz to 138 for 8. DC were bundled out for 137. Brief scores: UP Warriorz 138/8 in 20 ovs (Deepthi 59, Yadav 27/6) bt Delhi Capitals 137 in 19.5 ovs (Lanning 60; Deepthi 4/19).

VIKSIT BHARAT,
VIKSIT NORTHEAST

Dedication to the Nation and
Foundation Stone Laying for

Development Projects under
Infrastructure, Health, Education, Sports,
Har Ghar Jal, Agriculture, Sabroom Land
Port and Unity Malls

in

Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya,
Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura worth

₹ 55,000 Cr

by
SHRI NARENDRA MODI
Hon'ble Prime Minister

Sela Tunnel
India's highest tunnel
providing all-weather connectivity
to strategic Tawang region

Jal Jeevan Mission
3 lakh Functional Household
Tap Connections in
Arunachal Pradesh

Ekta Mall
to promote One District,
One Product, GI tag Products
and other
indigenous products

Connecting Arunachal
4G connectivity to
321 villages through
170 towers

in august presence of

Lt. Gen. Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd.) Hon'ble Governor, Arunachal Pradesh		Shri Pema Khandu Hon'ble Chief Minister, Arunachal Pradesh		Shri Kiren Rijiju Hon'ble Union Minister, Earth Sciences
Ms. Anusuiya Uikey Hon'ble Governor, Manipur	Shri Phagu Chauhan Hon'ble Governor, Meghalaya	Shri La Ganesan Hon'ble Governor, Nagaland	Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya Hon'ble Governor, Sikkim	Shri Indrasena Reddy Nallu Hon'ble Governor, Tripura
Shri N. Biren Singh Hon'ble Chief Minister, Manipur	Shri Conrad Sangma Hon'ble Chief Minister, Meghalaya	Shri Neiphiu Rio Hon'ble Chief Minister, Nagaland	Shri Prem Singh Tamang Hon'ble Chief Minister, Sikkim	Shri Manik Saha Hon'ble Chief Minister, Tripura

9th March, 2024 | IG Park, Itanagar | Please be seated by 0800 hrs

Live telecast on DD NEWS Channel number: Tata Play - 502 SD, 501 HD, Airtel - 381, Dish TV - 699, Videocon D2H - 328
DD Arunprabha Channel number: Tata Play - 1986, Airtel - 649, Dish TV - 1514, Videocon D2H - 846, DD Free Dish(DTH) - 11
Time: 10:20 hrs onwards

DIPR/ARN 0010 /2023

PG 2



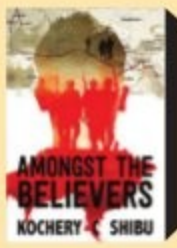
BOOK NOOK



Blood, With A Drop of Sherry

by TS Mami

No one can imagine an unexpected death in the revered Ootacamund Country Club. It was the case of a stranger who keeled over and died. But events take a sinister turn when a shocking bludgeoning occurs weeks later. At the heart of this mystery is the perky but very suspicious Sherry Darling.



Amongst The Believers

by Kochery C Shibu

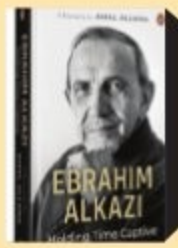
Set in the back drop of war-torn Afghanistan and Ukraine. The lives of Nanda, Khusrav and Rekha are entangled in a web of espionage. A journey through the unknown, a saga of love, espionage and suspense that will keep you riveted.



Ayurveda Advantage

by Vicram Sharma

It represents the authors' knowledge and experiences into an easy-to-read and conversational format. This handbook delves into the principles of Ayurveda, offering recommendations and remedies tailored for everyday modern living.



Holding Time Captive

by Amal Allana

From Ebrahim Alkazi's student years in England, to his theatre movement in Bombay and Delhi, this book charts his unwavering commitment to put Hindi theatre on the map.



ART BAZAAR

Model Priyanka Arora explores handicrafts on sale at the Bengaluru Utsava on Friday | VINOD KUMAR T

QUICKFIX

UNNIYAPPAM

INGREDIENTS

- **Raw rice:** 1 cup
- **Urad dal:** 1/4 cup
- **Jaggery (grated):** 1 cup
- **Pinch of baking soda**
- **Coconut (grated):** 1/4 cup
- **Ripe bananas (mashed):** 2
- **Cardamom powder:** 1/4 tsp
- **Ghee for frying**

METHOD

- Soak rice and urad dal for 4-5 hours, then grind into a smooth batter.
- Mix jaggery, mashed bananas, coconut, cardamom powder, and baking soda.
- Let the batter rest for 1-2 hours.
- Heat the appam pan, add ghee, and pour batter into the molds.
- Cook until the edges turn golden, then flip and cook the other side.
- Remove and drain excess ghee.
- Serve warm and enjoy your unniyappam.



Contributed by **Sisiny Unnikrishnan**, Malappuram

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Open-Air Cinema

Experience the best of Bollywood under the open sky as Sunset Cinema Club showcases Shahrukh Khan-starrer *Kal Ho Na Ho*. Step into the world of Hindi cinema, where every frame tells a story and every song stirs the soul.

- 📅 **WHEN:** March 10, 7pm
- 📍 **WHERE:** RMZ Millenia, Kensington Gardens
- 📄 **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com



One With Nature

Use the serene energy of nature and improve your mental and physical health through a meditation workshop that focuses on balancing chakras. 📅 **WHEN:** March 10, 7.30am

📍 **WHERE:** Cubbon Park, Kasturba Rd 📄 **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com



Comedy Extravaganza

Embark on a rib-tickling journey with renowned comic sensation, **Aiyyo Shraddha**, as she kicks off her uproarious So Mini Things Tour! This 60-minute show promises an entertaining exploration of the mundane aspects of everyday life.

- 📅 **WHEN:** March 10, 7pm
- 📍 **WHERE:** Dr BR Ambedkar Bhavan, Vasanth Nagar
- 📄 **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

Treasure Hunt

To celebrate Women's Day, Cycol and Spokes Women has organised a cycling treasure hunt where you will ride throughout the city to find a special treasure.

- 📅 **WHEN:** March 10, 6.30am
- 📍 **WHERE:** Indiranagar Club, HAL 2nd Stage
- 📄 **DETAILS:** 9611300185



Speak Your Heart Out

Get on the stage to give words to your thoughts and put them in front of others through poetry, stories or comedy at this interesting open-mic session.

- 📅 **WHEN:** March 9, 5.30pm
- 📍 **WHERE:** Jagriti Theatre, Whitefield
- 📄 **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

Theatre Time

Watch an original Hindi play *Silvatein - The Winkles in Time*, a thought-provoking narrative about two strangers, an unexpected encounter between them and their conflicting realities.

- 📅 **WHEN:** March 9, 7pm
- 📍 **WHERE:** Medai - The Stage Bengaluru, Koramangala
- 📄 **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com



Melody Night

Experience Indian classical music in its true form at a live performance by musical artist **Dharini Veenaraghavan** and get a chance to interact with her.

- 📅 **WHEN:** March 9, 5.30pm 📍 **WHERE:** Bangalore International Centre, Domlur
- 📄 **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

Poetry Meet

Join a soulful evening filled with poetry and stories about life, vulnerabilities and emotions by popular writer **Ashish Bagrecha** in his show *Sab Theek Ho Jayega*.

- 📅 **WHEN:** March 10, 7pm
- 📍 **WHERE:** MLR Convention Centre, Whitefield
- 📄 **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com



Sizzling Salsa

Put on your dancing shoes and get ready for this Salsa dance workshop where you will get to learn everything from basic techniques to partner work. Open to all levels!

- 📅 **WHEN:** March 10, 4pm
- 📍 **WHERE:** Lahe Lahe, Indiranagar
- 📄 **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

NOWSTREAMING FITBIT



MERRY CHRISTMAS (Hindi, Tamil)

Two strangers meet on a fateful Christmas Eve, but a night of romance soon becomes a nightmare. Revealing anything more would be a crime.

Cast: Vijay Sethupathi, Katrina Kaif, Tinnu Anand, Radhika Apte
● **Watch on:** Netflix

MAHARANI S3 (Hindi, series)

A homemaker gets handed the keys to the kingdom and is announced as the heir to the CM of Bihar.

Cast: Huma Qureshi, Sohum Shah, Amit Sial, Pramod Pathak
● **Watch on:** Sony LIV



FOREIGN

DAMSEL (English)

A young woman agrees to marry a handsome prince - only to discover it was all a trap. She is thrown into a cave with a fire-breathing dragon and must rely solely on her wits and will to survive.

Cast: Millie Bobby Brown, Nick Robinson, Robin Wright
● **Watch on:** Netflix



Netflix:	₹199/month
Prime Video:	₹299/month
Jo Cinema:	₹999/year
Disney+ Hotstar:	₹899/year
Zee5:	₹699/year
Viki Rakuten:	₹299/month
Aha:	₹699/year
Sony LIV:	₹299/month

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

✉ @XpressBengaluru

✉ bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com

📱 @xpress_bengaluru

EKA PADA ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA VARIATION

(ONE-LEGGED DOWNWARD FACING DOG VARIATION)

It is a standing inversion that requires balance and flexibility. This pose is an advanced variation of one of yoga's most fundamental poses, Adho Mukha Svanasana. Traditionally, it is believed to activate the Muladhara (root), Manipura (wisdom) and Ajna (third eye) chakras.

STEPS

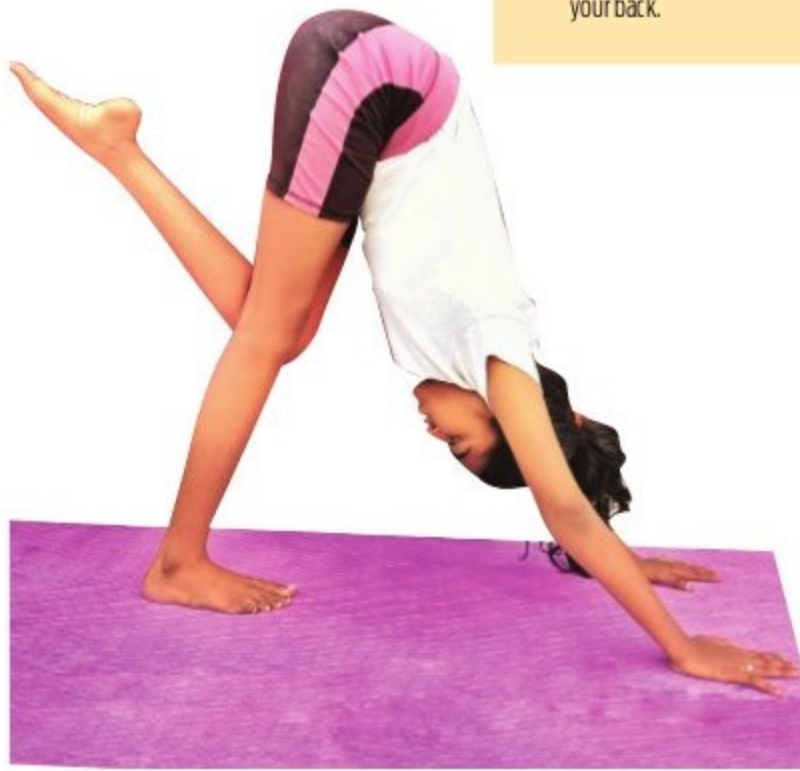
- Start by coming on all fours.
- Keep toes firm and lift knees off the floor while exhaling. Keep the elbows and knees straight.
- Stretch your arms forward to keep the upper body tilted towards the front. Lift your hips as much as you can so that body makes an inverted V-shape.
- Press your arms on the floor and keep inner arms touching ears while stretching the neck.
- This is Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose).
- Then, breathe in and bend your left leg at the knee and raise the foot towards the sky, retaining both the knees together.
- Try to maintain the balance when you bend and lift up your left foot. Don't lift your left hip, you have to keep hips parallel and squared to the floor.
- To maintain balance, spread your fingers on the floor. Also, firmly ground your right heel and do not extended it towards the back.
- Shift and maintain your body weight on both hands from your right leg.
- Keep your head down, looking backward. Stay here for 30-60 seconds. Exhale and bring your leg down.
- Inhale, lift up your right leg and follow the same process.
- Perform 6-10 rounds.

BENEFITS

- Helps reduce anxiety, stress, depression and fatigue.
- Helps calm your mind.
- Stretches and strengthens your hands, shoulders and calves.
- Helps relieve insomnia, headaches, backache and menstrual pain.
- Improves balance, confidence and digestion.
- Helps open up the chest, hip flexors and hamstring.
- Stretches the quadriceps, particularly in the full expression of the pose.

LIMITATIONS

- People who have high blood pressure, carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS), or suffer from diarrhoea, should avoid this.
- Breathe deeply during all the process. Practise this under the guidance of a yoga expert.
- You may make this pose more complex by extending your bent leg towards your back.



By **N Elumalai**, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

ARTCORNER



FINDING SPACE FOR THE VANISHING ONE

Artist **Sreelakshmi KS** seeks to understand the language of nature and its importance through her art

A SHARADHAA

YOGARAJ Bhat, celebrated for his romantic films, occasionally ventures into commercial entertainers infused with social themes. In his latest outing, *Karataka Damanaka*, he revisits the essence of old-school masala films, this time examining the pressing issue of water scarcity.

Taking inspiration from the Panchatantra, the director explores the duality of foxes, symbolising the eternal struggle between good and evil. The title itself, *Karataka Damanaka*, reflects this dichotomy, drawing on the timeless themes of friendship and betrayal depicted in the *Mitra Bida* tale.

Virupaksha (Shivaraj-kumar) and Balraj (Prabhudeva), are seasoned con artists who delve into the world of deception and redemption. The two, with their cunning prowess, navigate a web of deceit with practised ease, their faces mirroring the slyness of foxes. The narrative takes a dramatic turn when their decades-long spree of swindling comes to an abrupt halt as they find themselves behind bars. Amidst the chaos of incarceration, they encounter Jailer (Rockline Venkatesh), a no-nonsense cop determined to unravel their tangled web of schemes. Just when the con artists thought they had reached a dead end, fate takes an unexpected twist as the Jailer offers them a shot at freedom—with a risky mission in the obscure town of Nandikoluru.

Thrown into a world of drought-ridden landscapes and dwindling hope, Virupaksha and Balraj, now disguised as

and deceit. As they step into the parched village, they're greeted not by the vibrancy of life, but by the desperate cries of a community on the brink of collapse.

With the weight of their past sins heavy on their shoulders, the duo must tread carefully, balancing on the fine line between redemption and relapse. But amidst the dust and despair of Nandikoluru, they find unexpected allies and an untapped reservoir of strength within themselves.

They manage to win the trust of Ramanna (Tanikella Bharani), a key figure in the town's intricate network. As they delve deeper into the heart of the village, they not only

KARATAKA DAMANAKA

Cast: Shivarajkumar, Prabhudeva, Ravi Shankar, Priya Anand, Nishvika, and Rockline Venkatesh

Direction: Yogaraj Bhat

confront the harsh realities of drought but also the deeper wounds of the human spirit. Can Virupaksha and Balraj rise above their past transgressions to bring hope to a forsaken community? The answers lie within the dusty streets and forgotten dreams of Nandikoluru.

Yogaraj Bhat sheds light on the interconnectedness of all living beings. As water scarcity takes center stage, the film evolves into a poignant reflection on

contemporary issues, offering a blend of social commentary, traditional storytelling, and masala entertainment, but somewhere it gets lost in the journey.

Karataka Damanaka's narrative, peppered with fun episodes and lively dance sequences, is further enriched by the debut pairing of Shivarajkumar and Prabhudeva. Shivanna's unwavering energy, coupled with Prabhudeva's quick wit, inject vitality into the script, complementing the duo's impressive dance moves. Priya Anand and Nishvika Naidu add to the allure, ensuring the show stays engaging despite occasional hiccups.

The ensemble cast, including Telugu actor Tanikella Bharani, Ravi Shankar as the antagonist, along with Nayana, Govinde Gowda, and Rangayana Raghu add essential strength to the narrative.

Harikrishna's music brings in the commercial touch through various songs, and background scores, while Santhosh Rai Pathaje's cinematography captures the stark reality of drought-ridden villages, portraying the dry, desolate landscape with authenticity.

Amidst the entertainment, the film subtly touches upon important themes like water conservation, rural migration, and agricultural challenges. It's in these

moments that the film finds its true resonance.

So, is *Karataka Damanaka* worth a watch? With Shivanna and Prabhu Deva leading the charge, this just might surprise you with its blend of entertainment and relevant message.

A CHAOTIC JOURNEY THROUGH KANNADA CINEMA'S PAST AND PRESENT

A SHARADHAA

KANNADA cinema fans have cherished the timeless gems, *Mata* and *Edelu Manjunatha*, for years. Spearheaded by actor Jaggesh and director Guruprasad, these acclaimed classics had set the bar high, kindling anticipation for their latest collaboration, *Ranganayaka*, after a 15-year hiatus. Expectations soared, hoping for a continuation of the enchantment witnessed in their earlier works.

Prior to the film's release, Guruprasad often proclaimed himself as a frustrated viewer. This approach seemed to have raised expectations and left some viewers wanting more from *Ranganayaka*. Guruprasad steps into the limelight, portraying himself as a director under the scrutiny of a TV show chasing high ratings. In parallel, another narrative unfolds, where Jaggesh takes the center stage as a prince-in-training, alongside his beloved (Rachitha Mahalakshmi). From the opening sequences to the intermission, it seems Guruprasad has dominated the first half more than Jaggesh. Venting his personal frustrations, anger, and critics, the director channels his emotions onto the screen, albeit somewhat chaotically. Plunged into hypnosis, director Guruprasad journeys into his past life, unveiling connections stretching back a century, when he ventured into filmmaking in 1911. Here, *Ranganayaka* (Jaggesh) emerges as the hero in this tale. In between, the film delves into the critic faced by Kannada cinema, interwoven with Guruprasad's focus on the embellishments of this story.

The director here has attempted to construct a narrative solely through conversations and dialogues, poured in merely for the sake of it. However, he has neglected proper introduction, storyline, or execution. At times, Guruprasad even inserts the names of a few Kannada heroines, which seems unnecessary and irrelevant to the narrative.

Jaggesh's attempt to sal-



RATING
2.5/5

RANGANAYAKA
Cast: Jaggesh, Guruprasad, Rachitha Mahalakshmi, and Chaitra Kotoor
Director: Guruprasad

narrative. Rachita Mahalakshmi's role primarily revolves around romantic duets, leaving her with little else to do. On the other hand, supporting actors Chaitra Kotoor, Shatamarshan Avinash, Shobha Raghavendra, and Yogaraj Bhat as psychologist, among others are given broader scopes. Guruprasad's storytelling is complemented by Anoop Seelin's background score, providing an enjoyable backdrop. Songs like *Gaali Tangali*, and *Enna Manadarsi*, provide a delightful retro touch, enhancing the overall experience. However, Guruprasad's tendency to overload the screen with unnecessary elements for a small subject may frustrate and disappoint both the character *Ranganayaka* and the viewer.

While *Ranganayaka* may not soar as high as its predecessors, it still delivers enough entertainment for viewers to relish, albeit tinged with a hint of disappointment.

vage the film with his performance is hindered by outdated mannerisms and dialogue. Without a strong storyline, the film lacks substance, making it challenging to appeal to the audience. In the initial half, Jaggesh's role as *Ranganayaka* feels confined to a couple of songs and scenes, and viewers are initially drawn in by the actor's comic timing and expressions, the latter half sees a more solid grounding of the

KARTIK BHARDWAJ

If not done already, there is soon going to be a Letterboxd list titled 'Action/ thriller where Ajay Devgn goes to any length for his daughter'. The latest addition to it (after *Drishyam*, *Drishyam 2*, *Shivay*, and *Bhola*) would be *Shaitaan*. Directed by Vikas Bahl, this is a supernatural horror-thriller which feels as stuffed as the description of its genre. The name of the game is excess. *Shaitaan* is intense without intent. It is also impatient. It jumps from one terrifying scene to another because it seems unsatisfied with the "terror" registering with the audience. This is a loud film which goes bonkers because it just can. It sees an eight-year-old and thinks what if we break his head so that he spends most of the film's runtime recuperating, only to be thrown off the terrace later. Jack Kerouac might say, 'The only people for me are the mad ones,' But not for me. Especially, if they are this mad.

In the movies, whenever a family is seen giggling on the sofa or pushing each other into the pool, you know things aren't going to go too well for them. Meet the Rishis: Daddy Kabir (Devgn), Mommy Neha (Jyotika), daughter Janhvi (Janki Bodiwala) and son Dhruv (Anngad Raaj). Kabir is a controlling, helicopter parent (he flexes with the knowledge of his children's mobile passwords) portrayed as an adorable, caring Dad. His daughter is a wide-eyed teen with picky food preferences (no paratha or chai please), son is the stock cutball who calls one of the parents by their first name and wife is just, there. While on a vacation, they meet a helpful stranger, Vanraaj (R Madhavan), who ultimately makes his way into their farmhouse on the pretext of charging his phone. There is something unsettling about him and soon

This father vs fiend flick does everything for shock value



Janhvi has taken a bit more than the regular older-man fancy into him. When Kabir tries to take Vanraaj out of the house, Janhvi pushes her father back. She is being controlled by Vanraaj, who has done black magic on her. She laughs at his command, cries, dances and tears a packet of tea leaves into her mouth. It's going to be a long night.

A Hindi remake of the 2023 Gujarati film *Vash*, *Shaitaan* at times feels like torture porn. It doesn't gradually build up the stakes, rather it is unstable, like a live wire. It's relentlessly evil but just for the sake of it. There is no apparent method to its madness. It also tells more than it shows. Madhavan's Vanraaj frequently breaks into the-

atrical soliloquies claiming how he is the devil incarnate and how much pleasure he derives from inflicting pain. It is a bit too much. The cruelties unfolding on the screen horrify you in the beginning but then ultimately leave you numb. The film goes into circles of predictability. Vanraaj asks Janhvi to do something terrible, her parents Kabir and Neha plead and cry and ultimately resort to assaulting him. This is done multiple times till the scenes are sucked dry of any novelty.

Madhavan's larger-than-life portrayal of Vanraaj also feels inflated. He isn't the mischievous devil, but more like a cachinnating monster. In a scene that feels inspired by *The Dark Knight* (2008), Madhavan's Vanraaj burns the money and jewellery given to him by the parents so that he lets go of their daughter. It's more jokey, less *The Joker*. To keep myself from losing interest in what was unfolding on the screen, I started picking on film references. There was *The Exorcist* (1973), as we see Janhvi soil herself in the living room. *The Shining* (1980), as she breaks down a wooden door with a hammer. Devgn's Kabir is an able foil for Vanraaj, but his act of the powerless father is a bit one-note.

The issue is that *Shaitaan* does a lot for nothing. At times I felt it was a commentary on controlling men, especially during a scene where Vanraaj tells Janhvi that she has been given "too much freedom" by her parents. The only social commentary it probably made was that kids should not eat anything given by a stranger. The only lesson it preaches is that even if you are the devil, you may cry if you mess with the daddy.

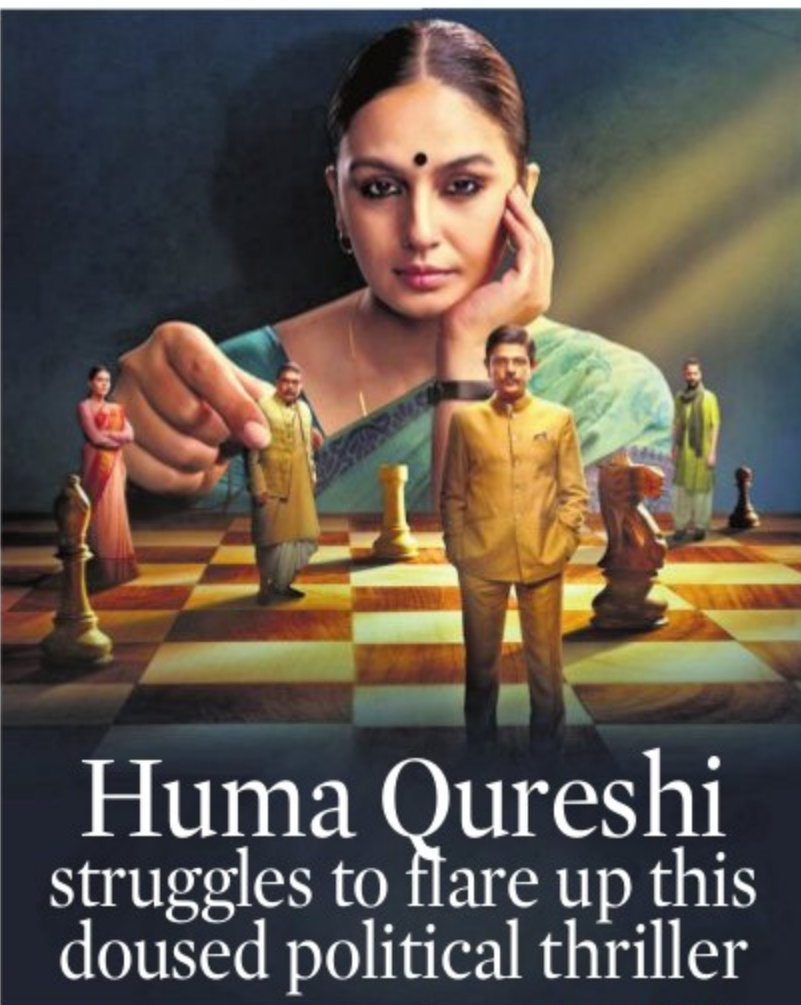
SHREYAS PANDE

THERE is a death early on in Sony LIV's *Maharani 3* and everyone gathers to pay their respects at a godman's abode. There are ministers present who discuss the reasons behind the person's untimely death and whether it was a planned murder.

Suddenly, their mobile phones ring and one by one, all of them check a video that has been forwarded. Even though the series is set in the early 2000s, when watching videos on the phone was still a farfetched ambition, it can be attributed to creative liberty. The video is a media report that blames the current Chief Minister Naveen Kumar (Amit Sial) for the murder. The ministers look visibly shocked.

Suddenly, Naveen enters the hall and the energy changes. Out of nowhere, reporters swarm him and ask questions right inside the hall where the dead body is lying and the family members are grieving. Naveen answers the media and goes to pay his respects. In just one scene, the series establishes a lot of things and quickly resolves them, leaving you dissatisfied. It is the classic violation of the 'show, don't tell' principle, something which pulls the series down from reaching any emotional highs.

After the events of the last season, three years have passed. Rani Bharti (Huma Qureshi) is in jail for murdering her husband Bheema Bharti (Sohum Shah). She is not languishing there but enjoys benefits like having her own cell with monthly visits by the doctor. Right from the start, we know she is wrongly accused while the real culprit runs the state of Bihar through dubious means. The only one who doesn't believe



in her innocence is her teenage son Jay. Rani wants to win his trust and denies seeking bail as she wants to get herself acquitted in the case. However, her plans are cut short when her children are attacked outside the school. The next minute, she calls up the lawyer in anxiety and out she comes.

There is no denying that Rani is a strong character. She is a woman of great resilience and strength in standing against the men in politics. She gets past their taunts and multiple attempts at belittling her. We see her doing powerful things but it seldom makes us feel anything. It is as if we know she is the strongest person who will rise up in glory every time. Due to this, even when she has moments of victory, it doesn't register strong-

RATING
2/5

MAHARANI 3
Directed by: Saurabh Bhavne
Created by: Subhash Kapoor
Streamer: Sony LIV
Starring: Huma Qureshi, Amit Sial, Vineet Kumar, Pramod Pathak, Kani Kusruti, Anuja Sathe, and Sohum Shah

which she delivers according to the underlying emotion, but it is just not enough. Her accent and efforts to pull out a dialect come in the way of going deeper into the psyche of the character. When she comes on screen, we see her making sharp movements with eyes thickly laden with liner. However, her performance doesn't reach beyond that. More than the emotions, what gets noticed is the way she says the lines, leaving you distracted and disconnected.

On the other hand, it is Amit Sial who brings authenticity with his minimalistic performance. Even when the writing does not utilise him fully, he embodies the arrogance and subdued glory of the chief minister successfully. It is a treat to see the emotions glide through his face as he becomes Naveen Kumar in body and spirit. Dibyendu Bhattacharya as the IPS officer Martin Ekka is riveting and so is Vineet Kumar who plays the senior minister Gauri Shankar Pandey. There is a natural flair to his performance, particularly in the serious scenes where he adds layers with his quirky antics. In a show, where the writing needed to be sharper, it is the performances of the supporting cast that keep it together.

Maharani 3, directed by Saurabh Bhavne and created by Subhash Kapoor, tries to critique the present times through a tout political thriller. However, it fails to hit its mark. In a poignant scene where Martin tries to convince a senior officer to take action in a case, he invokes the lines of the poet Mukti-bodh. He says, "Jo hai use behtar chahiye (We need something better than what we have)". Sadly enough, the same can be said about the series.